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PERSONAL SALESMANSHIP

AN OUTLINE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL
PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESSFUL SELLING

BY
R. SIMMAT, M.A.

AUTHOR: "MARKET RESEARCH," "THE PRINCIPLES AND
PRACTICE OF MARKETING," ETC

WITH A FOREWORD BY
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FORMERLY HEAD OF THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT, MESSRS. ROWNTREE & CO., LTD.



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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THIS little book first appeared when our British salesmen were being criticized by many as mere order-takers. The selling techniques of other nations were being quoted as examples for them to follow. Fortunately this advice was not taken too literally. Experience has proved that the methods of salesmanship successful in other countries cannot be applied entirely to conditions in Great Britain. We have had to work out our own methods, learning what we can from our competitors and adapting it to our specific requirements.

PERSONAL SALESMANSHIP was one of the first books to outline an adaptation of the sales technique employed abroad to conditions in this country, and at the same time emphasize the importance of the personal element in the relationship between salesman and client. It has not been necessary to alter much that was written for the earlier edition. The Publishers have been able to reduce the price to 3s. 6d., and so bring the book more within the reach of every young aspiring salesman, to whom I sincerely believe it can be of invaluable assistance.

R. SIMMAT.

LONDON.

July, 1934.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE efficient salesman has all his career been practising, consciously or unconsciously, the principles to be outlined here. No apology is made to him. This short outline of the factors involved in successful selling is intended to be a guide to the young salesman just starting out on the road. The seasoned salesman will have acquired his knowledge after years of perhaps bitter experience which have imprinted the lessons learnt more indelibly on his mind than could be done by any course of study.

It is hoped to impress the fundamental principles of salesmanship upon the beginner in such a way as to save him many of the disappointments and trials he would otherwise undergo. The aim is to make his path easier, so that he will do more good both for himself and for his firm.

It is not claimed that this will be an exhaustive treatment of the subject, nor would it be expected that every point outlined should be considered when making any one sale. Such would not be possible. The object is to present various factors which generally affect the making of a sale. Once these have been absorbed and mastered it will still be a matter for individual discretion as to what are the best methods to be employed in carrying through any particular sale. This work will provide the factors—the method in which the factors are employed to best advantage will remain a matter for the individual. Each salesman has his own personality, and his sales technique must be adapted accordingly. There are, however, certain broad principles which must underlie all selling, and these will be dealt with briefly and clearly.

FOREWORD

OVER recent years the most striking feature in the development of Psychology has been the tendency to become more experimental, more practical and more applicable to the problems of everyday life. The armchair speculations of our grandfathers have gradually been supplanted by experimentation and measurement, by classification and description of facts. "The Psychology of Education," "The Psychology of Industry," "The Psychological Factor"—phrases like these are finding their way into everyday speech. How acute the realization of the contributions that psychology can make to most things has become apparent to me through many lecture discussions during the last five years. Since a large part of such discussions is devoted to what is known as Vocational Selection, the question of a possible use of Psychology to salesmanship has inevitably cropped up.

Effective salesmanship looms very largely in the public eye at present; hardly a day passes without a reference to the topic through the Press. The questions put in discussions invariably crystallize into these two—

1. How can psychology help us to select persons who are going to be efficient salesmen?
2. How, after selecting them, can it help us to train them so that they realize their potentialities to the fullest extent?

The second question is probably more easily answered than the first, and a large part of the answer is to be found in this book. There is, however, at the same time, indicated a partial answer to the first question, for the book directs attention to the study of personality, both that of the salesman and that of his customer.

So far, psychological investigators have failed to

discover or initiate anything approaching an adequate test for selecting salesmen. All, however, are agreed that, whatever other factors enter into the question, personality dominates the situation. For this reason one welcomes a book which lays adequate stress on personality without degenerating into a popular and misleading treatise.

The salesman who takes himself and his work seriously should by no means neglect to study himself closely as regards his abilities and aptitudes, and especially his personality. He should measure his mental agility through reliable, standardized tests; he should measure his knowledge of words and the facility with which he uses them to express himself and, above all, he should measure his character traits and study the interaction of his own personality and those of others with whom he establishes contacts. To put it briefly, he should regard and treat himself and his job as a scientific problem to be scientifically handled. There are valuable hints in this book for the right treatment of the problem. No efficient modern sales force, seeking to develop its personnel by every means and not only those dictated by tradition, however hoary, should neglect it.

V. MOORREES.

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PERSONAL SALESMANSHIP

CHAPTER I

THE SALESMAN AND HIS PERSONALITY

- (a) SOCIAL qualities: Height, dress, carriage, facial expression, voice, conversation, culture; (b) Personality characteristics: Persuasiveness, quick reaction, initiative, energy, sympathy, humour, geniality, ease of manner, optimism; (c) Temperament and character: Self-confidence, assertiveness, ambition, fearlessness, persistence, co-operation; (d) Habits to be developed: Thoroughness, dependability, system, economy of time and effort, fairness, memory, strategy.

EVERY craftsman has his tools—the carpenter his saws, the farmer his spade, and the dentist his forceps. The main tools of a salesman are not contained in his sample bag; the salesman's tools are personal assets—the many facets of his personality. Although preferable, it is not essential that the salesman should have the intellect of an Einstein. His genius must be that of personality. Selling ability consists of two parts personality to one part pure brain power. Everyone is not fortunate enough to be born with a super-intelligence, nor has anyone recently been fortunate enough to have developed a perfect personality. Adam may have possessed the ideal personality, but he has been dead a long time now, and since then the mould has been lost.

Although none of us possesses the ideal personality, and some possess a "better" personality than others, this personality can be developed. As personality is the main asset of the salesman it becomes important that anyone hoping to become a better salesman should analyse his own personality, and endeavour to discover in what way it can be further developed.

There are certain aspects of personality which are more important in the "make-up" of a salesman than others. These may be classified under two headings—

- (a) Social qualities, and
- (b) Qualities of temperament and character.

When a firm engages a salesman the management feel confident that he has these qualities in him, and that he will do his best to develop them, otherwise he would never be engaged. We will now examine these qualities and see exactly what they are and what may be done to develop each one of them.

✓Social Qualities

First among social qualities is the salesman's general appearance. If a salesman looks "cheap" and shoddy his "prospect" immediately concludes the goods he sells are cheap and shoddy as well. First impressions carry a great deal of weight. If they are good the path is made easy; if bad, they are difficult to overcome. Do not handicap yourself by making a bad first impression on account of your appearance. There may be something in the proverb that "the proof of the pudding is in the eating," but business men have very little time to waste on sampling internals. In these days of hustle they judge on externals first, then if these are satisfactory they begin to consider the pudding itself. Take it as true that if the externals are unimpressive then the inside of the pudding will never get a chance to be sampled. The main factors determining appearance are—

1. Height.
2. Dress.
3. Carriage and movement.
4. Facial expression.

Height

Everyone is not born tall ; it is well known, however, that in many instances the tall man commands more respect than the short man. The ideal height for the salesman is about 5 ft. 10 in., but we are not all that height. If we are not we can endeavour to compensate for it. Many lose inches in their height by stooping ; we can look taller by keeping our shoulders straight and holding our head upright. The disadvantage of height can be overcome by looking our customer straight in the face ; if you find it helps, add an extra layer or two of leather to the bottom of your heels. No potential buyer respects the salesman who immediately puts himself in an inferior position by stooping and looking at the ground instead of into his face—who talks to the ground instead of to him.

Dress

The clothes make the salesman. A salesman is almost invariably judged by the way he dresses. The “pusher” has one distinct style with check tie and clothes tailored in a freakish extreme of fashion. The conservative salesman wears a stiff collar 3 in. wide, a black tie, and a frock coat. The street pedlar of collar studs wears a coat with frayed sleeves and no collar at all.

Each of these extremes is undesirable. A salesman should dress just like an ordinary individual. He should not convey the impression that he is anything but an ordinary normal individual. Neatness is essential, but an impression of affluence is undesirable. The customer usually tends to consider the affluent salesman as having something wrong with him. On the other hand, a poor looking salesman advertises that his firm is a poor firm, and unable to pay him sufficiently to enable him to keep up appearances. Dress quietly, neatly, and

with taste. In other words, dress normally. Convey the fact that you are a gentleman, and usually customers will treat you as one.

Carriage and Movement

The outlook most men have upon life can almost invariably be guessed from the way they walk. A stooping, slouching salesman seldom obtains any orders, because he does not inspire confidence—and confidence is the keynote of any sales transaction worthy of consideration. The straight-shouldered, broad-chested salesman is like the Bank of England, he looks pretty sound. Do not lounge or lean against anything that is convenient when talking to a customer. The salesman who cannot stand upright without assistance for a short time does not give the impression that he is selling a sound proposition. The impression is that the proposition cannot stand on its own merits, like the salesman who cannot stand without leaning against the doorpost or the counter.

Walk briskly, upright, straight, and confidently. Walk as if you can conquer the world—after a while you will feel as if you really CAN conquer the world too. Then, when you have finished with your customer, it is more than likely you will have at least booked a substantial order, and can set forth again to conquer more worlds. No matter how tired you are, no matter how disappointing the day has been, smile as if you have conquered all before you, and sure enough you must book a good order in the end. In any case you will certainly not book more orders because your carriage advertises the fact that the day has gone badly with you. Nothing is so successful as success. If you feel downhearted because orders have not been coming in, bluff it through as if they had. There will be a greater

possibility of being successful with your next customer. No one sympathizes with the unsuccessful. Go into a customer with disappointment written all over you, and you will be disappointed with him too. Look as if you will conquer the world, and you'll go a long way towards it anyhow.

Facial Expression

The salesman cannot help the general contour of his face—he got that from his parents—but he can express his personality in his face. Everyone can cultivate a pleasing facial expression, and it goes a long way with the customer. The sullen, sour face recalls the uncle who used to reprove indiscreet pranks of youth. The pleasant, jolly face pleases at once, and the customer responds in sympathy. There is a warmth of mutual goodwill created. Don't let worries and troubles find expression in your face. Think life a great game, and the selling of goods the greatest and jolliest of all games. Find pleasure in everyone you meet and in everything they say to you, even if it is something actually unpleasant. You will be surprised how many orders per smile you can book.

So much for externals. The next process is to convey to your prospect the same good impressions of your worth with regard to the personality that is not revealed by outward appearance. Under this heading may be considered—

1. Voice.
2. Conversation.
3. Culture.

Voice

An unpleasant voice grates on a customer's nerves, especially if his nerves are on edge, as they frequently are these days. A voice may be unpleasant either on

account of its pitch, its tone, or its intensity. Some voices are unduly squeaky, others apparently coming from the salesman's boots. Some voices are mellow, others harsh. Some individuals cannot speak without broadcasting their ideas to the world in general; others whisper confidentially as if some important secret of state is being communicated.

All such extremes prejudice a sale. Like our faces, we cannot help many things about our voices; however, extremes can be modulated to more agreeable means. Speak plainly, confidently, so that the person whom you intend should hear CAN hear every word you say. Don't broadcast unless you are selling studs to a crowd on a corner. Don't whisper unless you are disposing of stolen goods, and you do not want the police to know about them.

Conversation

When you talk to a customer make it worth his while to listen, otherwise he won't. Do not discuss the same hackneyed topics. To sell your goods you have to talk about them, but you have to talk about other things as well. Don't be like the barber and depend on the weather for conversation. The more general information you can acquire, and the more you can talk about it, the more your customer will become interested in you. In proportion as he is interested in you, so will he be interested in your goods—and your orders will increase accordingly.

Your conversation must be versatile, sprightly, and interesting. Above all, be conversant with all the current topics of the day. Even if you are not particularly interested in them yourself, some of your customers will be, and with them it will mean a help towards your getting more orders.

Culture

Already it has been said that if a salesman conveys the impression that he is a gentleman he will be treated as such by his customers. Do not be highbrow. Highbrows are all right at Universities and such institutions, but they frighten most potential customers. Aim at conveying an impression of quiet refinement, unobtrusive politeness, and calm dignity. If you do you will find fewer customers slamming the door in your face or setting the dog on you. Refinement, politeness, and dignity are always respected, and to live up to the standard you set, the customer will, if possible, adjust the order accordingly.

During the transaction of business with your customers other aspects of your personality will be brought to the surface. These are—

1. Persuasiveness.
2. Quick reaction.
3. Initiative and energy.
4. Sympathy.
5. Appreciation of humour.
6. Geniality.
7. Ease of manner.
8. Optimism.

These are all interdependent on one another, but some attempt will be made to treat them separately.

Persuasiveness

Much will be said of persuasiveness later on. It is the most valuable portion of a salesman's make-up—without it he is not a salesman. Few customers will do much without persuasion, but with the assistance of persuasion a great deal can be achieved. It means making the customer change his mind or else develop a new attitude that will be more favourable to what

you want than his old attitude was. This should be done without letting the customer know directly that you are trying to cause him to change his mind. All the forces of suggestion and subtlety of argument must be employed. With some, persuasiveness is a natural gift, but it can be cultivated by all. The fundamental in all persuasion is suggestion. Do not let the customer think your personality is trying to dominate his and change his attitude. Employ indirect means. Suggest ideas and arguments rather than force them upon him, so that, finally, when he has changed his mind and allowed himself to be influenced by you, he will think he has come to his conclusion as the result of his own mental efforts. Don't be like many sales "experts" and FORCE ideas down your customers' necks. Forced growth of ideas does not pay in the long run, it antagonizes in many cases. Feed your ideas gradually to the customer by the indirect means of suggestion, then, when he has come round to what you wanted, stand aside and let him feel pleased at the ideas he thinks he has developed all by himself. Watch his dignity expand and the order to you as well. That's real persuasion.

Quick Reaction (Resilience)

The salesman must have a ready reply to everything the customer says, especially if what is said is not complimentary to either himself or the goods he is trying to sell. This is a matter both of mental alertness and general knowledge. The reply must be pertinent, must answer the customer completely if possible, and must be witty. Often it is not possible to answer at all easily an objection that is made. It is a good plan under these circumstances to parry the remark with an appropriate witticism. During the

ensuing conversation a solution to the objection may occur to you—if so, return to the subject. If no solution occurs to you, think it over during the rest of the day, and when you are at home that night, and during your next call on the customer bring up the subject and explain the answer to his objection. At no time admit that you are floored by any objection the customer thrusts at you. Many customers do not themselves believe in the objections they make to you. Their aim is simply to find out what you will do when so confronted. One of their pleasures in life is to watch your reactions and, if possible, disconcert you; a nimble and ready wit will always save the situation, and in most cases will be appreciated. There is a distinction between wit and flippancy—remember that. Also there are some objections and some customers that must be taken most seriously. The salesman who does not recognize when to be sparkling and witty and when to be profoundly serious should not be a salesman. All salesmen are actors, and they must know how to act according to circumstances, but *never* be at a loss for an answer. The salesman who hesitates loses his order. Remember a cryptic smile sometimes can answer a question quite well, and in addition has the advantage of being non-committal. A cryptic smile should be a salesman's last line of defence when he really *is* beaten.

Initiative and Energy

To be successful a salesman must radiate energy. Everyone hates to discourage energy. If a customer meets an energetic salesman he will be impressed and respond accordingly. It is a calculation in mental arithmetic that the salesman who calls on twenty customers in a day will get more orders than if he had

only called on ten of them. Don't get tired, or if you do feel tired don't show it ; at the end of the day when you feel like turning home ask yourself if there is not just one more call you might make, then go ahead and make it. You will find that these additional calls make your orders mount up in a year. Don't be too conservative in mapping out your day's work. Map out a slightly larger route than you think you will be able to cover, then just see if during the day you cannot do it after all.

Show your initiative and energy by not hesitating to make new calls when the opportunity occurs. Nine times out of ten you may not be successful, but every little helps. Try and open up new lines of trade. In other words, be a live wire. People appreciate live wires. Occasionally life becomes monotonous for the business man, and a live wire brightens up the horizon for him.

Sympathy

The word "sympathy" is made up of two Greek words, "sym"—with and "pathos"—feeling.

Politicians are said to kiss the babies of their constituents usually before an election to obtain votes. It is not often necessary for a salesman to act similarly towards the offspring of his customers. On the other hand, he must interest himself in the customer, and during an interview "feel with" him. Should a customer be in a bad humour, commiserate with him ; if he complains of hard times, agree with him ; if he abuses his competitor across the road, wax eloquent with him. Drift along with the tide of your customer's feelings until an opportunity presents itself—and sooner or later it will—then gently, without letting him know you are doing it, guide his thoughts towards what *you*

want to say to him. Let your customer feel that you and he are kindred souls—that is what is meant by sympathy.

You will have to study him from two angles—

1. His present moods and present circumstances.
2. His general interests at all times.

Always adjust your mood to agree with his, but even before going into his shop have yourself prepared to fit in with his general interests. If he is an amateur photographer, study photography; if he is interested in bees, buy a book on bee-keeping, or better still, borrow one from the local library. The results will repay the trouble you have taken. Often it is advisable to find out all about the interests of a prospective customer before your first call on him, and to arm yourself beforehand with a certain amount of knowledge. Introduce the topic gradually, and if your information has been correct he will develop it for you. You will leave his shop with a smile on your face and an order in your pocket.

Appreciation of Humour.

A comedian is rarely taken seriously. To get orders a salesman must be taken seriously by his customers. Nevertheless the appreciation of humour is an essential in the salesman's make-up. A joke lightens an interview and makes relations with customers run smoothly; it makes things less impersonal and relieves monotony. A sprinkling of humour keeps up the salesman's spirits, and may brighten up a dull day for his customer.

Salesmen are usually notorious for their repertoire of humorous anecdotes. They are of varying quality. It is wise to understand customers before testing their sense of humour; they may not approve of anecdotes which you consider extremely humorous. To tell such

customers certain anecdotes would be disastrous. Use your discretion. Let them express their humorous side first; always remember to laugh at their jokes no matter how feeble they are—it tickles their vanity.

An appreciation of humour is a salesman's greatest asset in another entirely different way. If he can appreciate the humorous aspect of things that happen, this will help him to withstand cheerfully many disappointments. Many times it will be necessary to enjoy a piece of unconscious humour from a customer all on your own. If the humour is unconscious don't let your customer see you laughing at him, it will hurt his feelings. It helps the salesman's spirits to see the humorous side of things; a joke or two will oil the wheels during an interview, but the salesman must beware and not overdo matters. He must not be a comedian, and he must be careful to adapt his humour to circumstances.

Geniality.

We have said before, the salesman must be an actor. Irrespective of how you feel towards a customer, whether the customer has not paid an account for a year, whether he is the sourest person on the day's round, or whether he slammed the door on you the last time you called, always treat him with unvarying geniality. Treat him as if it was the greatest pleasure in the world to call on him. This does no harm—it costs nothing except a great effort of will in many cases. In the long run it will mean more orders for you.

Ease of Manner

No matter how difficult the customer, or how uncomfortable you may be *inside*, never let this be betrayed in your outward bearing. Nervousness shows lack of

confidence. If a customer perceives he has made you feel uncomfortable he may conclude there is something about the goods which you are trying to sell which makes you feel uncomfortable. Do not allow this to happen. Train yourself to exhibit an ease of manner under the most trying conditions. Some customers may definitely try to make you uncomfortable; others may do so unconsciously. Both types will tend to admire you should you remain undisturbed, but even if they do not you will gain more by remaining unperturbed. You will be able to answer their objections more confidently and effectively.

Optimism

The optimist is always happier than the pessimist. A salesman must cultivate optimism. Always hope for the best, and you'll get it occasionally. If you never hope for it you will certainly never get it. Be an optimist by all means, but a doer as well. Set your hopes high, but do not leave things at that. Do all you can yourself to achieve those hopes: don't only be a dreamer, act as well.

Optimism is infectious. The optimistic salesman will communicate his optimism to the customer provided it has a basis of reason. Build up your optimism on a substantial foundation of logic; wild optimism never ultimately does much good. Bring every promising feature into the structure of your optimism, then having fashioned it securely, proceed to sell your optimism to the customer. If you are convinced yourself, that will be an easy matter, and will result in many more orders than if you always considered the black side of things. In fact, never admit there is a black side to anything—except perhaps the progress your competitor is making! Even then, it is not always advisable.

QUALITIES OF TEMPERAMENT AND CHARACTER

In addition to the ordinary personality traits which are apparent to the customer there are other qualities which are just as essential but which, though always functioning, must remain unobtrusive. They constitute the dynamic force behind the salesman. They must be functioning during every transaction, but in such a way that the customers will never completely realize when they are functioning.

These qualities may be considered under the headings of—

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. Self-confidence. | 4. Fearlessness. |
| 2. Assertiveness. | 5. Persistence. |
| 3. Ambition. | 6. Co-operation. |

Self-confidence

If a salesman has no confidence in himself he cannot expect anyone else to have any. Know the extent of your own capabilities, then have confidence in their carrying you as far as they may be expected to. Do not be over-confident. Know yourself and what you can do, then do it. Face the world confidently so far as you know your capabilities take you. When problems arise which are beyond your capabilities, or when you come into contact with someone possessing knowledge superior to your own, keep your mouth shut and see what you can learn. To express an opinion under these circumstances is to be guilty of possessing a swollen head.

Assertiveness

To know when to assert himself is a quality a salesman must develop, but he must employ it most

unobtrusively. His assertiveness must never be obvious, but always quietly insistent. Under no circumstances must the assertiveness of the salesman swamp the personality of the customer, but in a subtle way it must be employed to lend strength to the customer in making his decisions, so that he will feel his own dignity being enhanced. Build up the customer's dignity and centre it about your ideas, and you have the ground prepared for a big order.

Ambition

The man who thinks big will prove big. Hitch your wagon to a star, don't aim to be a routine salesman all your life. Go after big orders, aim at increasing your sales year after year. Fix your eye on the big job ahead of you, study for it, learn all about it, and you'll get it some day when you least expect it.

Fearlessness

There is no reason to be frightened of any customer. A cat can look at a king. In this country a salesman cannot be put in gaol for refusing to let an imposing-looking customer disconcert him. Remember your customer is human, the same as you are, with the same weaknesses as other men and perhaps a few more. Stand up to your customer, and in a quiet way let him see you are sure of yourself. Sooner or later you will discover his weaknesses, and then you can play on *them*. No matter how impressive he may be, remember he is only a man—whether he be a millionaire or the greatest commercial genius of the age. Without losing your dignity by being pert, look him in the face, and let him know you are not affected by his reputation or his impressiveness. Do yourself justice. In the long run he will appreciate it.

Persistence

Never be put off by the word "no." If the customer will not order a line one journey, smile, and when you get outside make a note in your diary to ask again next time you are around that way. When you ask again, introduce the subject tactfully, and if possible, in a different way to the last. Continual dripping wears away a stone; besides, history tells us that Robert Bruce watched a spider trying to do something nine times. History repeats itself, and usually before you have tried even nine times you will have got the order you desired. Each time you make the attempt do so in a novel way. Avoid a monotonous repetition of the same presentation.

Co-operation

The salesman, to be successful, must learn to co-operate with his fellow-salesmen, his sales office at headquarters, and with his customers. By co-operation with the firm's salesmen on other territories he will learn selling possibilities that may not have occurred to him, or he may learn to overcome difficulties which have cropped up. Exchange of ideas with one's colleagues is beneficial to all. Often a salesman in one territory has the opportunity of putting business in the way of his colleague in another territory. Do not begrudge affording help in this way. Some day your colleague will be able to do the same for you.

Close co-operation with the sales office at headquarters is most vital, and will be discussed further in the next chapter. Follow closely and in detail the wishes expressed to you from headquarters. They may at times seem unreasonable to you, but they have been the result of very mature consideration, and headquarters can take a much broader viewpoint than

you can from your particular district only. Finally, co-operate with your customer. Find out his wishes, and so far as possible, do what you can to fulfil them. A satisfied customer is your best advertisement. Make him feel it is your one aim in life to serve him and his interests.

HABITS TO BE DEVELOPED BY THE SALESMAN

In addition to the various traits of personality that have been outlined, there are certain habits which the salesman must introduce into his daily routine. These are—

1. Thoroughness.
2. Dependability.
3. System.
4. Economy of time and effort.
5. Fairness.
6. Memory.
7. Strategy.

These are all more or less acquired only as the result of experience.

Thoroughness

Once you start on a course of action see it through in detail. Do not leave details to settle themselves. If you do they will go all wrong. No detail is too small to be given every attention.

Dependability

Make your customer feel that once you have said you will do a thing you *will* do it. Also make him feel that whatever you have told him is indisputably right. Do not tell him anything unless you know it to be correct.

System

Much of a salesman's time can be wasted through lack of system. Plan your day's work ahead, and, if possible, plan the course you intend to adopt at each interview.

Economy of Time and Effort

Experience will teach what time and what effort must be expended on each customer. Do not spend time unnecessarily with a customer. Remember your job is to sell goods, not gossip. However, do not cut short an interview when the expenditure of a little more time will produce greater results. Experience alone can teach you what to do. It is a good plan after each call to review what you have done and consider whether you have wasted time and effort, or could have achieved better results with the expenditure of more time and effort.

Fairness

Always be fair in placing the blame for any mistakes that have occurred. If the mistake has been yours admit it, but resolve that it shall not be repeated.

Memory

A salesman should endeavour to develop his capacity for remembering faces and names. Nothing so damages a salesman as to forget or mispronounce a customer's name, or else to fail to recognize a customer at any time.

Strategy

The success of all interviews depends on the skill with which the salesman can manage them. This can only be acquired after long experience. The whole

PERSONALITY RATING¹

SOCIAL QUALITIES

	1	2	3	4	5	Remarks
Height						
Dress						
Carriage						
Facial expression . .						
Voice						
Conversation						
Culture						
Persuasiveness . . .						
Quick-reaction . . .						
Initiative and energy .						
Sympathy						
Humour						
Geniality						
Ease of manner . . .						
Optimism						

¹ This scheme follows closely that adopted by Dr. A. H. Martin, Director, the Australasian Institute of Psychology.

PERSONAL SALESMANSHIP

TEMPERAMENT AND CHARACTER

	1	2	3	4	5	Remarks
Self-confidence . . .						
Assertiveness . . .						
Ambition						
Fearlessness . . .						
Persistence . . .						
Co-operation . . .						

HABITS

	1	2	3	4	5	Remarks
Thoroughness . . .						
Dependability . . .						
System						
Economy of time and effort .						
Fairness						
Memory						
Strategy						
Total						

SUMMARY

	1	2	3	4	5	Remarks
Social Qualities						
Temperament and character						
Habits						
GRAND TOTAL						

strategy of an interview depends on how far the salesman can analyse and sum up the situation, then subtly suggest the points which he wishes to make.

CONCLUSION

The personality traits outlined have been summarized on pages 19-20. Having read what has been said about each one of them, analyse yourself carefully. Take the traits one by one. If you feel you possess them to an average degree put a small tick opposite the trait and in the column headed (3). If you have more or less than what you consider the average put a tick in one of the other columns, bearing in mind that the column headed (5) is the lowest end, and that headed (1) is the highest end. Carry this analysis of yourself right down the page, and be honest about it. The result will give you a lot of information about yourself.

After a month go through the list and do the same thing, and see if you have developed any of the traits. If you have not, ask yourself the reason why. It should be a matter of very great interest to you to go through the list at various periods to see for yourself how far you are developing, and in what directions you are not developing.

CHAPTER II

THE SALESMAN'S DUTIES

- (a) **ORDERS** and accounts; (b) **Services** to customers: Connected with goods themselves—complaints, deliveries. Connected with selling of goods—advertisements, displays; (c) **Information** to headquarters: What lines are selling, economic conditions in territory, competitors' lines, new possibilities.

MOST people, and even some salesmen, have the impression that a salesman's duties consist wholly of writing down orders and collecting accounts. This may be so for the salesman representing a firm of no repute. The keynote of modern salesmanship is service. The efficient salesman must be the link by means of which the services his principals offer to their clients can be obtained and most effectively exploited by his customers. All firms of repute offer various services to their customers, and it is on account of these services that their goods find a more ready market than those of other firms who do not offer such efficient services.

Before considering the "service" aspect of salesmanship we will deal with the salesman's duties with regard to orders and accounts.

Orders and Accounts

In many instances it is comparatively simple to book an order of some sort. Paradoxically, the easier it is to obtain an order the more careful the salesman should be. Taking an order is not merely a matter of writing it down in the order book. It is the salesman's duty to know clearly before he takes an order whether the customer will be in a position to pay for the goods after they are delivered, and when the payment will be made. It is not so important with small orders of,

say, under £5, but no large order should be booked without inquiry into the customer's financial standing, unless the salesman has had similar previous dealings with him, and has found them satisfactory. Unfortunately many dishonest practices have crept into modern business, and many customers book large orders without having any intention of paying for them. If you have not previously dealt with the customer in a large way, refer the matter to your superior before doing anything definite.

Many lines are retailed to the public at a standard advertised price. It is the duty of the traveller if he is selling such lines to point out clearly to his customer at what prices the goods must be retailed, and to see that they are retailed at that price. Should the customer sell them at any other price, the matter should be referred to headquarters for instructions before a further order is taken. The practice of "cutting" standard-priced goods has, of late, increased to an alarming extent, to the detriment of both the prestige of the manufacturer and the trade of the retailer, who still attempts to do business along legitimate lines. This tendency is doubly deplorable because many "cutters" have been unable to meet their liabilities, and their subsequent bankruptcy has let loose on the markets a flood of standard-priced goods for purchase by other shopkeepers at prices below those charged by the manufacturer himself. It is the duty of a salesman, in justice to other customers and his firm, to endeavour to suppress these "cutting" tendencies, either by persuading the offending customers to do business at the standard prices, or, as a last resort, by referring the matter to headquarters with a view to ceasing to supply goods if the practice is not discontinued.

Another sometimes unpleasant duty the salesman

must often perform is the collection of accounts. It is in carrying this out that in many cases the utmost tact must be employed. The terms under which accounts must be paid are clearly stated, and must, in general, be rigidly adhered to. Occasionally, however, circumstances may arise in which the salesman can use discretion, and extend the period of payment. Such cases must, as far as possible, be exceptions rather than the general rule, and should only be permitted when the salesman knows the customer well, and is convinced of his repute and good intentions.

Generally, present the account with a smile and a cheery word. That represents the sugar coating which covers what may be a somewhat bitter pill. Do not insist on payment except when necessary. After all, most customers pay up smilingly. The salesman soon gets to know those who will. With these treat the account as a matter of minor importance. No one likes to be reminded too forcibly of money matters, and least of all the good payer. When the money is handed over accept it with an appropriate remark expressing in some way your thanks. A small word of thanks goes a remarkably long way.

If the customer is one whose account is in arrears do not be obviously insistent about payment. Preserve your general attitude and geniality, although subtly and firmly insisting that some, if not all, must be paid. It is often a good plan to suggest that personally you would not mind if the account ran on for ever, but if something is not done with it you will be getting into trouble with headquarters. Reference to an abstract and unknown headquarters often has a salutary effect on a defaulting customer, and further, it tends to remove from you to headquarters any unpleasant feelings the customer may have. Your relations with

the customer may then remain more cordial than would otherwise be the case. The time may come when the customer is in better circumstances, and his orders more worth having. In such instances it is better that the personal bond between you and the customer remains cordial, and that the impersonal bond between the customer and headquarters should be strained. The personal bond will in most instances obtain the orders for you, but if this has been severed there is no possibility whatever of orders being obtained. Headquarters will rely on you to make the most of your personal bond to smooth over past unpleasantness.

The Salesman's Services to His Customers

These are of two types—

- (a) Connected with the goods themselves, and
- (b) Connected with the selling of the goods.

The former class of service may be classified under two headings—

- (a) Complaints, and
- (b) The delivery of goods.

Complaints

It is the duty of the salesman to pay attention to all complaints made to him by his customers. It may be possible for him to remedy a complaint himself; if so, this must be done as soon as possible. Most complaints are related to the quality of goods, faulty packing, slow delivery, and mistakes in invoicing, etc. If the salesman cannot adjust the matter locally it must be referred to headquarters. Remember, no complaint is too trifling to be taken seriously. A customer who complains is a dissatisfied customer. The salesman is the local representative of his firm, and as such must strive his utmost to satisfy his customers. Even if headquarters are

liable to treat a reported complaint lightly, if the salesman remains convinced of the genuineness of the complaint he must exercise more pressure on them and endeavour to make them see more clearly the details of the case. It is most probable that headquarters have not taken the complaint seriously because the salesman's report has not been complete as to details. With all complaints go thoroughly into details, and if the complaint is unwarranted explain the matter tactfully, so as to satisfy the customer. Where it is the result of a mistake made by either some member of the firm's staff or yourself, apologise and give the assurance that you will take every precaution that it will not occur again. If after having gone into details you decide the complaint is a genuine one, then see what you can do locally to remedy the matter, but if it is beyond your control, then and not until then, report the matter to headquarters. Whatever the procedure, always make every effort to satisfy your customer, even though the whole matter may seem unreasonable to you. The customer will appreciate the interest you take in his well-being.

Delivery of Goods

From your customer's point of view it is most important he should know when the goods he has ordered will be delivered, and further, that they will be delivered on the day for which they have been promised. If the customer does not feel confident on these points he can never adequately control the extent and range of his stock. This may not be quite so important with the smaller shops, but it is most vital with larger shops. Whoever the customer be, and however small the order, the salesman must always give the matter of delivery his closest attention. Do not promise

a delivery unless you are sure it will be made, but once you have promised a delivery date make sure the goods are delivered at that time. If they are not, take the matter up with the delivery department to ensure that the failure will not happen again.

SERVICES CONNECTED WITH THE RETAILING OF GOODS

It is just as much to the interest of the manufacturer as it is to the interest of the retailer that goods should be sold to the consumer public. Appreciating this, and despite the fact that most retailers make independent efforts to sell goods, the manufacturer endeavours in most cases to appeal direct to the public, and so help the retailer in this way.

Manufacturers assist the retailer to sell in two ways—

- (a) By means of advertisements;
- (b) By means of display.

Both of these provide good selling arguments for the salesman, and it is his duty to see that his customers avail themselves fully of any advantages to be obtained in this way.

Advertisements

Advertisements are of two types—

1. Newspapers, magazines, etc., and
2. Posters.

It is the salesman's duty to see that goods he sells are adequately advertised in the newspapers, etc., read in his territory. If he feels this is not being done, the matter should be reported together with suggestions to headquarters. Familiarize yourself with your firm's local advertising plans and pass the information on to your customer as an argument why he should buy the

goods advertised. Make full use of "pulls" and the advertising schedules supplied to you by your firm as concrete examples of what advertising is being done; you will find these an effective selling argument.

Most large manufacturers hire poster space in all promising territories. The agents owning these poster sites are often not very interested in any one manufacturer whose posters are on their hoardings. In any case it is the duty of a salesman to watch *every* interest of his firm in the territory he covers. Therefore, if he sees any of his firm's posters in bad condition or in unfavourable positions it is his duty to report this to headquarters. Or if the salesman feels more representation on the hoardings in his territory would increase sales, then he should communicate this fact to headquarters, giving full particulars. Finally, as with the newspaper advertising, use the posters on the local hoardings as sales arguments.

Display

Manufacturers supply a great deal of material with which goods may be displayed either in shops or in the windows. The salesman must see that his customer obtains all the display material he is entitled to from headquarters, and further, that his lines are prominently and well displayed both in the shop and in the window.

It is display that sells goods in the shop; if the lines the customer has bought from you are kept on a high shelf or put away behind the counter they will never be sold. Persuade your customer to show your goods prominently, and tactfully advise him how to display them. Often it is possible to obtain a skilled window-dresser from headquarters to arrange his windows for him. Persuade him to avail himself of this service. Both you and your customer will be surprised how

display affects the sale of goods. Its importance cannot be over-emphasized. See that your customer is supplied with all possible display material from headquarters, i.e. dummies, cut-outs, stands, etc., and see that he uses them to best advantage.

SUPPLYING INFORMATION TO HEADQUARTERS

So far as he is able, the salesman must act as the inquiry agent of his firm, and supply headquarters with all the information possible relating to trade in his territory. Occasionally headquarters may send down a special research expert to make inquiries along certain lines in various territories. This is not always either possible or practicable, and headquarters cannot be completely conversant with conditions in any territory unless the salesman makes it his business to see that his reports contain details of trade as far as he knows them from personal experience. The information concerning trade which a salesman should supply to headquarters may be classified under four headings—

1. How various lines are selling, and what is being asked for by the public.
2. Economic conditions in his territory.
3. Competitors' lines.
4. New possibilities.

How Various Lines are Selling

It often happens that headquarters decide to introduce a line, and it does not sell in certain territories, or else it only sells as the result of very intensive effort. It may not be quite what the public want, so far as the salesman's own territory is concerned. The salesman must carefully note instances such as these and forward complete details to headquarters. If every

salesman in the employ of the firm does this the result will be that headquarters will have a picture of what is happening over the entire distribution of the product, and will be able to legislate accordingly.

Old established lines occasionally slacken off, perhaps due to insufficient advertising or some other reason. The salesman should carefully note such tendencies, and forward details to headquarters.

New packings often prove unpopular. Headquarters have introduced them as the result perhaps of a hoped-for decrease in production costs or on theoretical grounds as to their suitability. The salesman must communicate details of the effect of such innovations to headquarters. Again, "outer" packings may not suit the particular requirements of certain of the salesman's customers. For example, a quarter gross packing may be more popular than the gross, as customers may be willing to buy a quarter gross but not a gross. Such preferences are of vital importance, and must be noted by the salesman for transmission in his report.

Economic Conditions in the Salesman's Territory

Economic conditions vary from time to time and from place to place. Similarly the spending unit may vary. For example, during a boom period a spending unit may be 3s. 6d.; in times of depression this may diminish to 1s. 6d. This must most obviously determine what people buy and what your firm must produce for them to buy. Keep headquarters posted as to economic conditions in your territory—their present state and also, if possible, whether they are likely to improve or become worse, and when this may happen, adding, if you can, the reasons why and the class of people who are likely to be affected.

Competitors' Lines

Sales of your firm's lines can be very seriously affected by what competing firms are doing. A competing firm may introduce new lines. Buy samples of these and send them to the Marketing Department. Do not hesitate, thinking some other salesman will be sending them along. He may be thinking the same thing about you. Competing firms may also "push" certain lines by increasing newspaper advertising, by supplying additional display material to customers, or by making special concessions. Headquarters wants to know from you all details about matters such as these. Watch your competitors' prices carefully, both to the retailer and to the public, for should there be any difference between their prices and those for the goods you are selling, it is vital to inform headquarters.

If you find one of your lines "slipping" and a similar competing line gaining, think the matter over. Do what you can to remedy it—if you cannot, communicate with your senior. Conversely, if you notice any competing lines selling well make an effort to see if you cannot capture some of that trade for yourself.

Any pamphlets, etc., issued to shopkeepers by competing firms should be obtained if possible. Remember you cannot supply headquarters with *too much* information concerning the activities of competitors. Always make sure, however, that the information is most accurate, otherwise you may lead your firm into awkward situations.

Possibilities

Progress demands that your firm must always be introducing new lines or else remodelling old ones. The salesman should have a first-hand knowledge of new lines which may prove good sellers, and he should also

know in what way old lines need remodelling. Ideas will occur to him from time to time. Some of them will be good ideas, some will not. Every one who has an idea thinks it is an unique and good one. When you get an idea, think over it critically, then after a while, if you think it is a good one, send it on to headquarters—irrespective of whether it concerns improvements in delivery, a complaint, or some new possibility that may be exploited.

CONCLUSION

The duty of the salesman is not simply to take orders and collect accounts. He must act as the representative of his firm in every sense of the word; he must see that his customers obtain and make use of all the "services" his firm has to offer; he must remedy complaints, keep his customers satisfied, and, finally, he must always be in close touch with headquarters, keeping them fully informed of details as to what is transpiring in his territory. It is not until he does all these things that an individual is a salesman in the full and complete sense of the word.

CHAPTER III

THE PRODUCT

FIVE facts about his product the salesman should know: The market, similar competing lines, points in manufacture, conditions of sale, advertising and other selling aids.

EVERY salesman who hopes to be successful must know as much as possible about the product he is selling. In 90 per cent of cases the buyer is a man who makes his living out of retailing similar products; he will want to know how your product compares with others on the market. The more interested he is in the line the more he will want to know about it, and he expects the salesman to be able to give him this information. If the salesman cannot give it, the possibilities are against his obtaining an order.

In addition, the facts about the product are the chief selling-points which the salesman has at his disposal. To obtain an order, much more must be done than to simply show a sample and open up your order book. The product has to be "explained" to the customer. The better and the more interesting the way in which the salesman can do this, the more the chance of obtaining an order, either from a small, comparatively ignorant shopkeeper in a provincial town or from a highly-trained buyer in a large departmental store.

This does not mean that the salesman must know every detail, and then proceed to repeat these to all his customers alike. He must certainly know every detail about his product, but he will use his discretion as to what points are most likely to impress each individual customer. Every one knows how fascinating "gossip" may occasionally become; the selling-points about a product may be skilfully moulded into

very interesting "gossip," but the matter must be moulded according to the type of customer.

The main facts a salesman should know about his product may be classified under five headings—

1. The market.
2. Similar competing lines.
3. Points in manufacture.
4. Conditions of sale.
5. Advertising and other selling aids.

The Market

Before approaching any customer with a product the salesman should have carefully surveyed his territory and determined exactly what may be the public demand for the product. He should consider this from two angles: first, who will use the product; and secondly, when will it be used. That is to say, what types of individual will buy the product from the shops, and whether the sale is steady or seasonal.

The next step should be carefully to investigate the consumption of that particular type of product and its possibilities—that is, whether the public know of the product and use it regularly, or whether they are comparatively ignorant and will have to be educated as to its use by means of advertisement. It may be possible even to advance a step further, and arrive at the present per capita or some other equivalent form of demand, and even estimate a possible future demand.

The experiences of those who have already used the product are valuable to the salesman. If such are not available he should try the product himself and record his experience. In addition he may be able to ascertain from his colleagues the extent of the public demand for the product in other territories.

On the basis of this information the salesman will be

able to determine which retailers are likely to be able to sell the product, how much of it they can sell, the best means that can be employed to retail it, and to whom it can be sold. Employing this system he may discover types of retailer to whom the product will appeal, and on whom he has not up to the present made a call. He should not hesitate to exploit these new avenues; they often prove most profitable.

A salesman who has made a careful preliminary survey of all marketing possibilities of a product in his territory will be able to give his customers much valuable advice. He will be able to tell them how much to buy for a start, should they require this information. In addition he may be able to suggest when the customer should lay in a heavy stock, and when he should carry a small stock—this particularly applies to goods which have a seasonal sale.

Many methods of retailing which have not occurred to the customer may be suggested by the salesman as the result of his investigations; e.g. the possibilities of trading with certain clubs, societies, etc.

Similar Competing Lines

It is wise carefully to ascertain what competing lines are stocked in the district. Samples should be purchased and carefully examined, while prices and terms should be compared with those of the line it is intended to sell—also any special advertising aids, etc. The salesman will then be in a position to answer his prospect when he is confronted with competing lines.

The good and bad points of the competing product must be carefully analysed, and then compared with similar points in your own product. Note particularly all the points of superiority in the product

you are selling, and when interviewing the customer emphasize these, without, however, referring obviously to competing lines—the clever salesman will never be guilty of this; it does no good. Sell your goods on the strength of their merits and your own personality. Proclaiming the demerits of a competitor has seldom obtained a big order. If you initiate this policy it may hit back on you quicker than you expect.

Do not be downhearted if competing lines have a strong hold in your territory—rather accept it as a good omen that the market has been created and developed by a competitor, and that it is only for you to go one better than he has to get the business he now holds so strongly.

It is not always best to copy the methods of already established competitors in your territory, as such affords an opportunity for them to score. Strike out for yourself along original lines—learn a lesson from their failures and successes and build your own policy accordingly, but be original, and the effect you create will be more striking as a result.

The Manufacture of the Product

If it is possible the salesman should spend some time in the factory studying how the product he sells is made. Usually it is not necessary to have more than a superficial knowledge of manufacturing processes except where the salesman has also to be a technician, as in the printing trade. A customer is often interested in how products are made and asks the salesman, who looks foolish if he cannot say. It makes good selling talk if the salesman can tell the customer of the up-to-date machinery used in manufacture, or describe roughly the amount of research that has been done to perfect the product.

Secondly, the salesman should have a rough knowledge of the materials from which the product is made, where they come from, and the superiority of these materials over those from which competing products are made. Such details communicated to the customer need only be superficial, but they stimulate interest in the goods and often obtain an order. This is the reason why many firms invite customers to visit their works. Details of manufacturing processes, etc., are often supplied by the firm to salesmen on leaflets, etc. It is, of course, impossible, for obvious reasons, to give information relating to secret processes. This is not necessary; in any case few customers wish to hear a technical dissertation on the product, but they *are* interested in certain superficial features, and an account of these may serve to make your product unique and therefore desirable in their eyes.

It is essential for the salesman to familiarize himself completely with the various packings of the product, and the range available to customers. He should check the range from time to time to prevent himself accepting orders for lines which are out of stock or have been withdrawn from sale. Salesmen are usually notified of such changes from headquarters.

Conditions of Sale

The conditions of sale are matters in which every customer is naturally most interested. With most products the conditions of sale do not end with a price being quoted. Most reputable firms give a guarantee with their products, and the salesman must be prepared to give a full account of the matters involved in this guarantee. He must familiarize himself with both the wholesale and the retail prices of his range; it looks inefficient to be always consulting a catalogue.

The question of payment is important—what are the periods allowed for payment, and what discounts are deducted for payment within prescribed times. Special allowances either by lower prices or additional free goods are often made when large quantities are ordered. The salesman must be prepared to quote these. Many a customer will order a large quantity upon hearing of some concession.

The salesman must know when the goods will be delivered, and whether, if not satisfactory, they can be returned. He should be able to state definitely after taking every order when the goods can be delivered.

Advertising Services Attached to the Product

With the dispatch of many orders the firm will also send dummies, samples, or display material, and the salesman is usually supplied with particulars of these. He must master all details—they make excellent selling arguments—also find out how and when the product is being advertised both locally and nationally. These points must be communicated to the customer; but this aspect has been already discussed in the chapter dealing with the salesman's duties, and it is not proposed to repeat what has been said previously.

CHAPTER IV

THE CUSTOMER (a) IN RELATION TO HIS BUSINESS

TERRITORY in which business is located—Types of business—Departmental store—Multiple shops—The wholesaler or factor—The manufacturer-wholesaler-retailer—Cutter—Small retailer.

It is proposed to devote three chapters to consideration of the customer—

- (a) In relation to business.
- (b) In relation to his buying.
- (c) The mental make-up of the customer.

Each one of these chapters is inter-related. They should be read through completely to obtain a grasp of the principles involved in each one, then they should be re-read with the object of grasping the various aspects of each in their relation to one another.

In these chapters we shall know the customer as the buyer. In the buyer's relation to his business three aspects may be considered—

- (a) The territory in which the business is located.
- (b) The type of business.
- (c) What businesses in the territory are doing.

The Territory in which the Business is Located

Before calling on your buyer make a careful survey of the territory in which he is located. This will serve many purposes. Find out all you can about train and bus time-tables. This will save you time, you will be sure of keeping appointments, and will also not be worried by having to wait perhaps hours for a train when you have concluded your business.

It is well to determine carefully what type of trade is done in the locality, so that you can have a clear idea

in your own mind as to how you are going to put your proposition to the buyer.

In many districts the buying days and times are conventional, so to save disappointment find out carefully what conventions are usually observed. Most towns have market or exchange days, and there are periods when fairs are held; a great deal, and perhaps the greater proportion of business is done at these times. The salesman should acquire all the information he possibly can, and be on the spot at the appropriate time.

The Type of Business

Before making a call inquire carefully as to the type of business the buyer is engaged in. It is no use approaching the managing director if a departmental buyer does the buying. Also it is waste of time to call on someone who has not sufficient authority to be able to do any definite business with you. It is well worth while then to make some preliminary inquiries and make sure you will be approaching the right man.

There are other preliminary details that may or may not be obtainable. Find out, if possible, what powers the buyer has—if he is the owner of the business, if he has shares in it or if he is simply a paid employee. Ascertain whether the buyer has complete powers or must refer to "someone higher up," and what restrictions or limitations, if any, are imposed upon his buying.

A knowledge of the general policy of the business with which he is dealing will enable the salesman to approach a buyer more confidently. It may not be easy to obtain information as to merchandising policies, the profits worked upon, or the methods of buying control, but usually if the salesman goes the right way about it he can persuade a clerk or someone to "talk." It is worth trying, for if the information is in

any way complete it will materially assist the salesman in understanding the buyer's attitude, and in adapting his methods accordingly.

Many businesses do their buying through central buying offices or buying rooms where all buying is done. Others adopt the policy of permitting their managers to interview salesmen in their departments. Ascertain what is the correct procedure or, possibly, you may find yourself in awkward positions.

Finally, ascertain the nature of the business done by your buyer, what he sells, and for whom he caters, and build up your sales talk on this basis.

From the point of view of trading, the businesses with which the salesman may have to deal are classified under six headings—

1. The Departmental Store.
2. Multiple Shops.
3. Wholesale Distributors.
4. Combinations of manufacturer—wholesaler—retailer.
5. Cutters.
6. Small retailers.

The Departmental Store

The departmental store buyer is the prince of buyers. He whom the salesman interviews is a man whose experience has been wide. He is a keen business man and receives correspondingly high remuneration for his services. Invariably he works on a salary basis only.

The buyer in the departmental store is almost always prepared to take advantage of concessions for prompt payment or large orders; he will want bed-rock prices and prompt delivery and invoicing. Often when goods are delivered to a departmental store special conditions must be observed, such as quoting

the store's order number on the invoice, the forwarding of invoices with the goods, the delivery of the goods between certain hours and so on, and, to avoid confusion, the salesman should find out details such as these and note them on his order.

Departmental stores often require lines which have no definite trade-mark on them, or may even ask to have the store's name printed on them. The salesman should be prepared to say how far he can meet the buyer's requirements in this regard.

The buyer only interviews salesmen at specified times on specified days. The pernicious "buying room" where salesmen could only interview buyers through the medium of the buying-room staff has fortunately been abolished in most progressive departmental stores. Buyers are instructed to meet salesmen on the floor of their departments. Be careful to observe strictly the buying hours set down by the buyer. He himself would probably be only too delighted to meet you at any time, but he has had instructions from "higher up" and may get into serious trouble if the person "higher up" sees him talking to salesmen at unauthorized hours. Should this happen, it is natural he will not feel too friendly towards the salesman who has got him into trouble. Further, remember the buyer is a busy man. He is often required to do many routine jobs, and so has not the time to interview a salesman. Should you find this to be the case, don't force yourself upon him. Let him know when you will be calling again. He will appreciate your consideration.

The expenditure of money in purchasing stock is very closely controlled by the authority above the departmental store buyer. No matter how promising the line may be, if he has exhausted the sum allocated to him for purchasing stock the buyer will not be able to

consider it. This is worth bearing in mind when a most attractive line you are offering is turned down. Don't be too disappointed—you never know what factors are operating behind the scenes.

A final word. The salesman will find, in most cases, that it will pay him to take the departmental store buyer entirely into his confidence. Give him any scrap of information he asks for—in general it will not go any further. When he buys, he buys big, and on straight-forward terms. There is no bargaining over terms; they are either accepted or rejected. Above all, don't waste his time—often it is valued at pounds per hour, and he has to live up to that valuation to "hold down" his job. Never present any proposition unless you are certain of its soundness and its value to him.

Multiple Shops

The multiple shop always has a central buying office where specialists do the buying for distribution to a chain of shops. Otherwise, much the same conditions obtain as for the departmental store, that is, so far as the large multiple shops are concerned. Going down to the less extensive chain of multiple shops the buyer is often the owner of a chain of some four or five shops. In many instances he simply represents several small shopkeepers who have clubbed together to buy in quantities in order to obtain the advantage of prices.

Approach buyers of the smaller multiple shops warily. They often do not have the broadness or the keen business insight of the big buyer. They are often shrewd only in a cunning way, and have built up their business as the result of this policy. Be careful not to commit yourself until you have got to know them well. They are often waiting to take advantage of small points, and invariably are on the look-out for special

concessions and prices. Be on your guard. Do not take them into your confidence too much. Be straight in your dealings with them, but insist on prices and any other matters which concern the fixed policy of your firm. Do not "say too much" when talking to them, and be careful what you say.

Many owners of small multiple shops have little knowledge of stock control, although others have a great deal. They may or may not possess efficient book-keeping systems. Study the conditions carefully and adapt yourself accordingly. It may even be to your advantage to give advice to certain multiple shop owner-buyers on how to manage their businesses, but be careful to do it unobtrusively. Never express a definite opinion. You can, of course, advise them definitely how to buy your lines most advantageously with regard to quantity, etc. In fact, you may find this one of your best selling points with them. However, use your judgment, and do not overload them with stock. It will not pay in the end.

The Wholesaler or Factor

The wholesaler represents a different proposition altogether to the departmental or multiple store buyer. The extent of his business varies equally as with multiple stores, but he is a distributing agent acting between the manufacturer and shops. His profits are made out of re-sale to the shops. Of course, the wholesaler buys in quantities, and so obtains advantage of price. Many firms also have special prices for wholesalers and other prices for retailers.

It is interesting to study the development of the wholesale business. In most lines of trade now the wholesaler is a "fading" concern. Retailers have learnt it is to their advantage to purchase direct from the

manufacturer and so avoid contributing so much to the profits of a middleman. Manufacturers have in modern times encouraged these tendencies by sending salesmen to "glean" or call on small retailers, and by agreeing to supply smaller quantities of goods to small retailers. There was a period, however, when manufacturers would not do this, and small retailers could only obtain goods from the wholesaler.

The greater proportion of the wholesaler's trade is now done with small shops who cannot pay according to the manufacturer's terms, and so are willing to pay higher prices to the wholesaler for more extended credit—or else the shops are still too small to be worth the while of the manufacturer. Alternatively, the wholesaler provides a source of supply for goods, the demand for which is regulated by fashions, as in the drapery trade.

Bearing these facts in mind, it will be understood why at present the wholesaler does not feel too friendly towards the salesman in the employ of the manufacturer who also supplies retailers. The position is even more awkward if the salesman himself happens to call on retailers. However, these difficulties can be overcome in part, though rarely in their entirety, by the exercise of tact. The manufacturer's salesman must be prepared to make allowances for the excusable bitterness of the wholesaler towards him.

Most large manufacturing firms dealing direct with the retailer do not do a great deal of business with wholesalers, and what orders are obtained are given with great reluctance on the part of the wholesaler. He must supply certain branded lines to his customers simply because they are asked for, otherwise he would not do so. Invariably he is always pointing this out to the manufacturer's salesman.

Speaking generally, although there are exceptions,

the wholesaler is of little use to the manufacturer of branded goods. He does obtain distribution of lines in the smaller shops, but, wherever possible, the manufacturer will find it desirable to do his own distribution. When he does his own distribution the manufacturer feels that if his lines are not "pushed" it is due to his own faulty supervision, but if he has had to rely on the wholesaler he cannot feel so sure. The wholesaler will only "push" lines—and naturally so, too—which show the most profit to him. He is not interested in any particular line like the manufacturer. This last is the chief reason why manufacturers have ceased to rely on wholesalers as their chief means of distribution except in cases where they find it absolutely impossible to sell for themselves. In addition, shopkeepers prefer to deal directly with the manufacturer, that is if they can exist without extended credit. His prices are usually better, and they can also avail themselves of the many services offered, which have already been discussed here.

A certain class of wholesaler, recognizing the current tendencies, has embarked upon a policy of "cutting" against the manufacturer in the prices of the goods he supplies to retailers. This type will be considered under the general heading "cutters" in this chapter.

The Manufacturer-Wholesaler-Retailer

A small proportion of the customers upon whom a salesman may call combine the three functions of manufacturer, wholesaler, and retailer. That is to say, they manufacture a proportion of goods, they supply retail shops, and also probably control other retail shops, and so supply direct to the public. In a sense, this type of customer is a competitor of your own firm; hence, as a general rule, you will not obtain large orders

from him except for one or two lines. In certain cases it is possible to sell him semi-manufactured goods made by your firm which he can use in his manufacturing business, e.g. a salesman may do excellent business by selling such a man chocolate-covering material which he can use in the manufacture of his own brand of confectionery, provided, of course, headquarters are satisfied with the conditions under which the semi-manufactured product is used. Often headquarters may even go so far as to extend their services and give this manufacturer technical advice, provided he is prepared to do a certain proportion of business. When such possibilities offer themselves, the salesman should ascertain the circumstances in detail, and communicate with headquarters, asking how far they are prepared to go. An opportunity of this nature should not be neglected—it often means a large standing order.

The “Cutter”

The keen competition of modern trading has resulted in the alarming development of a new type of business man known as the “cutter.” By a cutter is meant a trader who sells goods at prices below the standard prices at which the manufacturer advertises they should be sold, or below the price at which they are commonly sold. The cutter is a thorn alike in the side of the manufacturer, the salesman, and the retailer who endeavours to trade along legitimate lines. It has often been maintained that the manufacturer has been responsible for the abnormal growth of this trader because the margin of profit allowed on the retail price fixed by the manufacturer is too great. It must be remembered that the price fixed by the manufacturer is usually on a $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent (selling price) basis, and that this just about represents a fair profit to the retailer when

overhead is taken into account. The principle the cutter works upon is that if he is content with a smaller margin of profit his turnover of stock will be more rapid, and so in the end he will actually make more profit in pounds, shillings, and pence. The fallacy of this reasoning is that there is a saturation point in the demand for every product, and if every one cuts the price then the position will develop into much the same as it was before the cutting began, and the turnover will once more be evenly distributed, but at a much lower rate of profit.

However, the most pernicious cutter is the type who works on a margin of 10 per cent and even less on a proprietary line, then, after he has "flogged" the line to such an extent that every shopkeeper around him has also been forced to work on the same basis, he drops the line completely and begins to flog something else.

Naturally, the practice of cutting has led to a great deal of unscrupulous trading. To obtain business a type of wholesaler has become prepared to supply cutters with large quantities of goods, for cash on delivery, at very small profits. This has led to the development of "cutting wholesalers" who supply goods to shops at prices below those set by the manufacturer. It is obvious that many cutters who do not watch their businesses closely will go bankrupt. Several close their shops to depart to unknown addresses before bankruptcy proceedings are initiated. This results in a flood of bankrupt stock being thrown on the market at reduced prices, and further aggravates the position. Certain wholesale cutters go further, and buy goods from manufacturers who offer long terms, say, six months. The cutter disposes of these goods in a day or so by selling them to fellow retail cutters at below cost for cash. For the remaining period of, say, five months, the enterprising wholesaler lends out the money so

obtained to needy members of the public, or else employs it in some other way where he can obtain a high rate of interest. At the end of the six months' terms the manufacturer is paid, and the enterprising individual is better off to the extent of the interest he has accrued.

Other still more unscrupulous cutters buy up large quantities of "rejects," "seconds," or "waste," and sell these as first-class goods at a lower "cut" price. The present tendency in districts where cutting has become very prevalent is for certain second-rate manufacturers to supply cutters with goods which are imitations of the standard-priced ones made by high-class manufacturers. On these goods the cutter makes the full $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent profit or perhaps even more. The cutter sells these inferior lines by means of the goodwill of the high-class products or else, becoming more daring, advertises them in such a way that the purchasing public will believe they are obtaining the high-class article. In case of accidents this type of cutter keeps a small supply of the high-grade goods carefully stored out of sight, from which he serves a customer who may become insistent about obtaining the better article.

The cutter has presented the manufacturer and the legitimate retailer with a difficult problem. He rarely touches articles which are not well known, and which do not have a definitely advertised fixed price to the public. Then as soon as he has "cut the inside out of the line" he invariably drops it. Retailers affirm that the manufacturer should deal with the problem by refusing to supply cutters, and this aspect is being continually fired at the salesman. Many manufacturers do refuse to supply cutters, and all manufacturers refuse to supply the cutters whose credit is doubtful. Some manufacturers are more scrupulous than others in this direction, but let it be said to the disgrace of the retailers—they

expect the manufacturer to boycott the cutter, but they themselves do not give that manufacturer additional support by refusing to do business with the one who still continues to supply cutters. The position is illogical, and rather than see good business go to his competitor through sheer lack of support from the retailer the manufacturer re-opens business with the cutter.

Many retailers assert that manufacturers give cutters special terms. This is not so with all reputable manufacturers, *but* even then, where the cutter is of the more reputable and honest type he actually pays the manufacturer cash on delivery. Indeed, it is not often wise for the manufacturer to trade with a cutter except on a very short term of credit.

A cutter in his territory certainly makes life interesting for the salesman when it comes to meeting his other customers. Should cutting be at all prevalent in the district he cannot be held responsible. In many instances the cutting shops are not on his call list, but obtain their supplies by devious means from places miles away. Nevertheless, the salesman is blamed for all this, and he should endeavour to bear the brunt of it cheerfully, making inquiries to try and find out from where the goods are obtained and then communicating the results to headquarters with the object of stopping supplies. If cutting is just beginning in a territory it can often be nipped in the bud by a firm stand on the part of the salesman and by headquarters backing him up to the extent of stopping supplies to the offender. In its infancy cutting can be suppressed, but as a rolling stone it gathers impetus. Its problems are at present not close to a solution. The salesman must use his judgment in its checking and, if possible, gradually suppress it by encouraging co-operation between the retailers in his territory and

headquarters. After all, one is inclined to the opinion that the suppression of cutting is a matter for the retailer himself to solve. Reputable manufacturers have done their share.

It is hoped that the description of cutting activities that has been given will at least afford the salesman some help in meeting the criticism that is levelled at him by reputable retailers when he calls upon them for orders.

The Small Retailer

Under this heading may be considered the retailer who owns his own shop or perhaps one or two shops. The size of his business and his turnover will vary from that of a high-class shop down to the small mixed business where the husband goes to work and his wife looks after the shop above which they live, and whose profits just about cover the rent.

Invariably this type of small retailer does not work so diplomatically as the man who buys for the larger shops, nor naturally is he such a keen business man, although occasionally he is exceptionally keen. As a general rule he relies on the advice of the salesman as to what should be bought—the personal element enters into the interview extensively. If the advice he has received in the past has been good, he will have implicit confidence in the salesman. If bad, the salesman stands a very poor chance of receiving an order. In selling to this type the salesman should place himself in the position of the owner of the shop and suggest orders accordingly. Resist strongly any temptation to place a big order if it is not justified; it will destroy your customer's faith if he discovers he is overstocked. Rather go without an order for the time being than risk that. Even at times advise the customer against placing an intended order if you feel it will not produce results.

It will not be difficult for the salesman to establish the necessary personal relationship that must exist between himself and this type of customer. This can only be done by straight and honest dealing, and the exercise of much tact. Once you "have" this customer, hold him. Advise him tactfully on his business occasionally, suggest displays, do him little favours, and he will be one of your best customers, and a living advertisement for your firm. But he requires most careful handling, and you may easily destroy the work of years by shaking his confidence as the result of some carelessly given advice or your falling to the temptation of booking him too large an order.

What other Businesses in Your Territory are doing

Most of your customers will be interested in what their neighbours are doing. Many things your customers tell you are intended in confidence, so be careful what is repeated. More construction may be put on what you said than you had ever intended, and difficult situations arise as the result. Nevertheless, for his own information, a salesman should obtain as clear a picture as possible of what his various customers are doing in the way of business. But he must keep it to himself or customers will not confide in him.

In addition the salesman should find out, if possible, what business others who are not his customers are doing—always with a view to making a call at the opportune moment, and selling his product to them. In short, he cannot concern himself too much with the business that is being done by both customers and potential customers in his territory—in what lines, with whom and by what means it is being done.

CHAPTER V

THE CUSTOMER (b) IN RELATION TO HIS BUYING

FOUR types: (a) The customer who knows what he wants and where he can get it.

(b) The customer who knows what he wants but not where he can get it.

(c) The customer who knows he wants something but does not know exactly what he does want.

(d) The customer who does not want anything.

WITH especial relation to his buying the customer may be classified according to four types—

(a) The customer who knows what he wants and where he can get it.

(b) The customer who knows what he wants but not where to get it.

(c) The customer who knows he wants something but does not know what it is he wants.

(d) The customer who does not want anything.

The Customer who Knows What He Wants and Where He Can Get It

Most of the salesman's customers probably like to think they belong to this type, but again only a few of them really do. Whatever the private opinion of the salesman may be he must always let them continue to think they do, but in reality guide them by means of subtle suggestion and persuasion towards buying what they really do want and obtaining it through him.

The customer who really knows what he wants and where to get it will now be considered. Usually he is the highly-paid employee-buyer of either a departmental or multiple store, but sometimes he may be the owner of a smaller organization with more than the usual knowledge of markets and business control. Apart from these he may be a smaller, conservative

man who has done trade along certain lines, bought from the same sources year after year, and is difficult to persuade concerning an alteration of policy.

The first type mentioned—the increasingly keen buyer with an intimate knowledge of markets and the ramifications of the business for which he is buying—will usually have his order ready written out for the salesman when he calls. No amount of persuasion will, as a rule, cause him to alter that order because he has already considered in his own mind all or most of the arguments the salesman can offer. He knows the needs of his business better than the salesman, and, in addition, probably also knows the products as well.

The only possibility is that the salesman may have either a new line or a special offer to make in which he will be interested. All the salesman can do will be to enumerate the possibilities, selling points, and terms covering the new line—such as he considers will interest the buyer—then leave the matter to him. The buyer knows exactly what he needs, and will in most instances give an answer straight away.

On no account must the salesman take it upon himself to attempt to teach this highly-specialized expert his job by trying to tell him what he wants. This will only result in antagonizing him. The salesman's main object, in his interviews with this type of buyer, must be simply to create a good impression and a favourable attitude towards his products, so that after seeing the samples, if the buyer does not want to give an order at the moment, he will remember them when he does actually need that type of goods, and make up an order accordingly. Make sure to present your products so that they will be remembered favourably, but do not force them. The buyer will give his order when circumstances create the need and not until then.

Passing to the conservative buyer who has dealt with the same firms and sold only the same lines year after year, the problem for the salesman is much different. It may be taken as a rule that this type of customer is not extraordinarily keen as a business man—if he were he would not remain conservative. Business conditions change, and no buyer who is really up to date in his methods can afford to ignore new lines and new manufacturing firms. It is often a difficult task for the salesman to break down this wall of conservatism. Invariably this type of buyer is also securely entrenched behind a fine misconception of his own dignity and business acumen.

The policy of the salesman must be directed towards educating this man to such an extent that the products he wants to sell him will find their way behind this wall of conservatism. It is worth the effort, because once this has been achieved it may be accepted as fairly certain that a competitor will find it equally difficult to get there.

The weakness in this man's armour is his dignity—the salesman must subtly make the most of this. Play upon his dignity slowly and gradually by building up a strong personal bond between yourself and this customer—work your products behind his conservatism. Little will be accomplished in one interview—sow the seeds—do not attempt to hurry matters. After several interviews your patience will begin to reap its reward; the process is slow but sure, and once you have that buyer you will hold him for ever. Never be guilty of the fatal mistake of attempting to precipitate a sale. Let the proposal that he buy your products emanate from him, although in every past interview you have been subtly and indirectly suggesting this to him. Lead him to think that the proposal is the result of his own

mature judgment as to the needs of his business—judiciously applaud his caution and final choice. Educate him, finally, to regard you not as a salesman requesting orders, but as a business acquaintance who values his opinion and admires his judgment. His dignity will thus be satisfied. Then because of the psychological fact that his dignity finds satisfaction in giving you the order he will continue to do so, and every time he does so in order to satisfy that dignity still further he will adopt an attitude of friendly patronage towards you. Do not resent this, however obvious it may be—it means orders for you.

The Customer who Knows What He Wants but Not Where He Can Get It

This is a more typical and common customer, and you may rest assured all your competitors are trying to sell him the idea that *they* are the persons from whom he should obtain the goods. The salesman will have here a battle worthy of his mettle. Before embarking upon the campaign of establishing contact with this customer carefully survey the situation, according to the principles already laid down.

If he really does know what he wants your task is not so much to sell him your product as to sell him the idea of obtaining it from your firm, through you. It is first yourself that you must sell to him, and secondly your firm. That is to say, a personal contact must be consolidated, and after that the advantages of obtaining the products from your firm only must be impressed upon him. Obtaining an order from this type of customer will be the result of three stages—

1. The salesman will sell himself to the customer.
2. The salesman will sell his firm to the customer.
3. The salesman will sell the idea to the customer

that the goods sold by him and manufactured by his firm are exactly what the potential customer has been seeking.

Like all other aspects of selling, these stages are interdependent, but for the purposes of discussion they will be considered separately.

The Salesman Selling Himself

This is the aspect upon which most emphasis must be laid in dealing with the customer who knows what he wants but not where to get it. Sometimes he is a vacillating individual, and once he has obtained an order it is the salesman's job to establish so strong a contact that on the next journey he will obtain a repeat order. It may be easy enough perhaps to get the first order—it is in the consolidation of his position that the salesman will find difficulty. Invariably a strong personal bond between this customer and the salesman will do more to effect this than any prestige the salesman's firm may have. The firm is an intangible far-away consideration—if he can achieve it the traveller must make the prospect feel the tangible force of his personality and its proximity to his own.

It is here that the aspects of personality considered earlier become vitally important. Before calling upon the customer the first time the salesman must ascertain his interests, his outlook, and as far as possible the details of his business. Having done this identify yourself with the potential customer and reconcile your personality to his. By your external appearance let him see you are worth talking to. In your subsequent conversation (which must be developed according to the result of your preliminary inquiry) interest him and, finally, make him feel that it will be a personal matter with you that he obtains the best deal from your firm.

This may not be achieved in the first or even the second interview, but having reached this stage proceed to sell the idea of his buying what he wants from your firm.

The Salesman Selling His Firm

This will invariably be a short stage, and not difficult after the salesman has sold himself. Once he has done this his personal contact will do much to sell his firm. At this stage the services his firm affords customers must be emphasized appropriately, also its dependability, and, finally, the prestige argument must be employed. Lay stress on the long and honourable record of your firm, etc.

Selling the Product

When the two previous stages have been achieved the third will be a natural sequence. As has been previously laid down the customer knows what he wants, and it is only the idea from whom to purchase what he wants that has to be sold to him. It will only be necessary for the salesman to show that the products he is carrying fulfil the required conditions. In the preliminary stages of business relations it is fatal for the salesman to attempt to sell anything but the product the prospect definitely indicates he wants—this sidetracks from the main issue and diverts his attention from his concrete need to something very suppositional. Only later when the salesman has clearly sold to the customer the idea that he should buy from him and his firm, and, further, has consolidated his position by demonstrating dependability, only then should the salesman make any attempt to introduce other lines which the customer has not up to that time felt he needs. Even then be extremely convinced in

your own mind that he really does need the product you are introducing to him. Be careful also not to be too obvious or pointed in your attempts to advise him what he shall use in his business, but once more rely on the subtle effect of suggestion.

The Customer who Does Not Know What He Wants

The process of selling a product to this customer is much longer than that in the type we have just studied. It may be analysed as follows—

1. The salesman making a preliminary survey.
2. The salesman selling himself.
3. The salesman selling his advice.
4. The salesman selling his firm.
5. The salesman selling his product.

The Preliminary Survey

This customer does not know what he wants, so before attempting to do business the salesman must make inquiries in order to formulate a concrete proposition which he can put to his prospect. The salesman cannot hope to convince the customer he wants anything unless he himself is definitely convinced beforehand. Spend some time on this preliminary survey—consider the problem impersonally, then determine exactly how far the products you are selling fit in with what the prospect requires. If they fit in go and call on him and introduce your proposition—if not, don't bother, it will only be wasting your time. Before presenting any proposition to a customer be convinced in your own mind that it is one which will mean more business for him. Do not call on the off-chance that it *may* be to his advantage—you will never achieve great results that way. Be sure, and if you are not convinced

yourself don't introduce it to him—it may weaken his faith in you if he already buys from you, and that would be fatal.

The Salesman Selling Himself

Having made the preliminary survey, the salesman must, if he has not already done so, proceed to sell himself to the customer along the lines laid down, but he will need to do so from a different point of view. In the previous type of customer the salesman definitely sold himself as the person from whom goods are to be purchased. With our present type of customer the salesman must proceed to sell himself as the person whose advice is good and should be taken.

Emphasis must be laid upon the advice which he is going to give his prospect. This advice, of course, will be to buy his product, but it must be camouflaged amongst a great deal of other advice. In the previous type of customer advice was not necessary. In fact to have given it would have been often detrimental, but with the customer we are now considering advice is essential. The advice must be *sold*, and this can only be done after the salesman has established personal contact and sold himself first.

The Salesman Selling Advice

The type of customer we are considering needs advice, and may or may not resent the salesman giving it to him—according to how the advice is given. It is necessary for the salesman to weigh up his customer and come to a decision as to how this can best be done. With some the direct method is effective, but the most successful will be the use of suggestion. If it is possible, and in most cases it will be, the salesman should lead up to the advice relating to buying his product after a

preliminary survey of trade conditions and how they affect his customer. This prepares the ground, and, if the salesman has made his preliminary survey carefully and sold himself effectively, there should be no great difficulty in convincing the customer that his advice is of value. Once confidence has been established the salesman can proceed to discuss the needs of the business in relation to his product—at first in a general reference to the type of product without mentioning his own specifically. Having prepared the ground thus far it is appropriate to sell the idea of his firm by the steps already described, and by gradually working towards the relation of his firm to the type of product he has convinced the customer he needs. This process may or may not be a lengthy one. If carried through effectively it will result in an order being given.

To develop the situation and obtain repeat orders the salesman must at subsequent interviews continue to sell his advice to the customer by keeping in touch, as far as possible, with the general conditions of his business, and so gradually become the counsellor to his customer—one on whom the customer learns to depend, and from whom he will seek advice. Once he has got to this stage the salesman must be extremely careful *never* to give the customer advice that will land him in difficulties, or the good work of perhaps years will be irretrievably ruined.

The Customer who Does Not Want Anything

If after a preliminary survey the salesman is convinced the potential customer does not want anything, that is the end of the matter, and to proceed further is simply waste of time and effort.

Many customers, however, think they do not want anything, but after a survey the salesman will arrive

at the conclusion that they do. In these circumstances the customer falls into the category we have just been describing—but first the salesman will have to sell him the idea that he does want something, and emphasis must be laid on this aspect of his relations with him. Thus an additional step is added to the process of obtaining the order, which now becomes—

1. The salesman making a preliminary survey.
2. Selling the idea the customer wants something.
3. The salesman selling himself.
4. The salesman selling his advice.
5. The salesman selling his firm.
6. The salesman selling his product.

Selling the Idea that the Customer Wants Something

The effectiveness of this stage will depend entirely on the grasp of the customer's business conditions the salesman has obtained during his preliminary survey. The more thorough this has been the greater the chance of success. However, success will also depend on the effectiveness of the third and fourth steps. In fact, all four steps are most interdependent, and the whole will represent a complete test of the salesman's selling ability. Once he has booked an order from a customer who felt previously that he did not want his product, the salesman can feel that he has achieved something. Nevertheless, the achievement cannot be regarded as a success unless it has been done in such a way that the customer will be ready to give repeat orders. After all, it is not the first order that counts for so much—a small order may be quite satisfactory at first—it is the repeat orders that are of such vital importance. After giving the first order the customer must not be left in such a state of mind that he feels the

order has been forced from him. He must feel that he has satisfied a want of which he was previously ignorant. He must feel pleased and grateful that the salesman has pointed out this want and the means of its satisfaction to him. Finally, the customer must feel resolved that if the goods he has bought are a success he will buy more from the salesman. It has always been up to the salesman in selling the goods to the customer to make sure, and be convinced in his own mind that they will be a success.

CHAPTER VI

THE CUSTOMER'S MENTAL MAKE-UP

INNATE tendencies to reaction—Emotions—The development of sentiments—The sentiments in business—The customer's self-regarding sentiment—Stages in social development and self-consciousness—The customer's expression of his individuality.

PSYCHOLOGISTS consider the mental make-up of any individual from two points of view—

1. The innate tendencies which are born in the individual.
2. The acquired tendencies which are the result of his development consequent upon his experiences during life.

Innate Tendencies

By innate tendencies are meant instincts and their accompanying emotions. Professor McDougall, in his *Social Psychology*, defines an instinct as "an inherited or innate psycho-physical disposition which determines its possessor to perceive and to pay attention to objects of a certain class, to experience an emotional excitement of a particular quality upon perceiving such an object, and to act in regard to it in a particular manner, or at least to experience an impulse to such an action" (page 29). In other words an instinct is a tendency to re-act that is born in us, while the feeling that accompanies such a tendency is known as the emotion.

The purest form of instinctive reaction is to be noticed in animals. Young children re-act more or less instinctively, but, as they develop, their social environment modifies these tendencies very considerably.

The principal instincts and their accompanying emotions in man, according to McDougall, are—

1. The instinct of *flight* and the emotion of *fear*.

2. The instinct of *repulsion* and the emotion of *disgust*.

3. The instinct of *curiosity* and the emotion of *wonder*.

4. The instinct of *pugnacity* and the emotion of *anger*.

5. The instinct of *self-assertion* and the emotion of *elation*.

6. The instinct of *self-abasement* and the emotion of *subjection*.

7. The *parental instinct* and *tender emotion*.

8. Instincts relating to *sex*.

Modern social conditions do not permit the unbridled expression of these natural instincts, and as a result they have been repressed and often changed entirely. One instinctive tendency with its emotion has become amalgamated with another to form what is technically known as a "sentiment."

Our emotions tend to become systematically organized about the various aspects of our life. McDougall thus defines a sentiment as "an organized system of emotional dispositions centred about the idea of some object" (page 159), and goes on to say "the organization of the sentiment in the developing mind is determined by the course of experience."

Sentiments, then, are acquired dispositions or tendencies to act in certain ways, and the same writer has analysed the chief sentiments as follows—

1. *Admiration*, which consists of the emotions of *wonder* and *submission* (*negative self-feeling*).

2. *Awe*—when *fear* is added to "*admiration*" the result is "*awe*."

3. *Gratitude*—this has been dissected into a combination of the primary emotions of *submission* (*negative self-feeling*) and *tender emotion*.

4. *Scorn* may be said to consist of *disgust* and *anger*.

5. *Loathing* implies *fear* and *disgust*.

6. *Fascination* has involved *fear*, *disgust*, and *wonder*.

7. *Envy* represents a combination of *negative self-feeling* and of *anger*.

8. *Reproach* is a mingling of *anger* and *tender emotion*.

9. *Anxiety* results when there is a "threat of injury or destruction against the object of the sentiment of love" . . . which . . . "excites in us *anticipatory pain* of its loss."

10. *Jealousy* results from a fusion of *anger* and *tender emotion* resulting in the expression of the tender emotion being thwarted.

11. *Resentment* occurs when our *positive self-feeling* is thwarted, and the emotion of *anger* stimulated.

12. *Shame* is a fusion of *negative self-feeling* and *fear*.

As the human individual proceeds to maturity a consciousness develops of himself as an individual, unique and separate from other individuals. This is known as self-consciousness, and is the result of the development of a sentiment known as the self-regarding sentiment. It is this sentiment which motivates all consciously controlled human action. It represses instinctive tendencies in proportion to its strength. During the development of the individual modification of his conduct passes through various stages—

1. The purely instinctive stage, i.e. infancy.

2. The stage where instinctive tendencies are checked by punishment, i.e. childhood.

3. The stage where instinctive tendencies are checked by social environment, i.e. what other people think—prematurity.

4. The stage where all conscious action is related to

its consistency with an ideal formulated by the individual's own idea of what he should do, synthesized as the result of experience and a conception of himself as an individual apart from others.

So much for the traditional psychological conception of the factors underlying human behaviour. A knowledge of these will assist the salesman in his understanding of a customer.

First of all, consider the customer as a self-conscious individual with a self-regarding sentiment developed to a greater or lesser extent according to his type. In popular language the manifestation of this self-regarding sentiment is his "dignity"—actually, it will be appreciated this word has a deeper significance than that commonly attributed to it. Each individual obtains satisfaction of his self-regarding sentiment when his own individuality finds expression, and most particularly when it finds expression at the expense of another person's individuality.

Conversely, when the sentiment is suppressed as the result of a superiority on the part of another individuality there is a violent emotional reaction akin to the primitive forms of anger, although this may not find expression as such. The salesman must remember this fact. Every transaction he has with a customer is a contact between the individuality of the customer and his own individuality. Thus, following what has been said above, if the self-regarding sentiment of the customer is thwarted in its expression there will be an intense emotional reaction to the disadvantage of the salesman. If, on the other hand, the customer's self-regarding sentiment finds adequate satisfaction as the result of the salesman's strategy, so in proportion will he be sympathetically disposed towards that salesman. It should, therefore, be the salesman's object in

every contact he makes to build up the customer's self-regarding sentiment, and allow it to have full satisfaction.

To proceed a step further—the customer's self-regarding sentiment will, if he is interested in his business, have certain elements of this aspect included in it. These will be related to—

1. His management of it, i.e. his display, his stock, etc.

2. His business astuteness in relation to his competitors, i.e. his buying, etc.

It is on these aspects that the salesman must play subtly, relating his own product to them by a process of suggestion.

For the purposes of salesmanship, suggestion may be defined as the gradual development by the salesman as a "sentiment" in a customer tending to result in the purchase of a certain product. The whole essence of suggestion is that the person to whom an idea is being suggested should become unconscious that the salesman is endeavouring to create such a sentiment in his mental make-up. Of course, at the outset he will know the salesman is endeavouring to sell him something, but the more astute the salesman is the sooner the prospect will forget this, and will become wholly centred on the goods and what the salesman is discussing. The idea of buying the goods will, if the salesman has been subtle, seem to have emanated from the customer's own mind once the process of suggestion has been brought to a successful conclusion by the creation of a very definite sentiment relating favourably to the purchase of the product. At the conclusion the sentiment must become related to, and linked up with, the customer's self-regarding sentiment in such a way that the customer feels that either his dignity, his managerial ability,

his business astuteness, or all of them, will be definitely questioned if he does not purchase the product—that is, if he does not purchase the product his self-regarding sentiment will not find adequate satisfaction.

In a similar way the salesman must endeavour to include his firm and himself if possible within the self-regarding sentiment of the customer. He must suggest to the customer that his “dignity” will be enhanced by selling his firm’s goods.

Having thus built up a sentiment around his firm, his products and himself, the salesman must endeavour to maintain the sentiment so that it becomes a very definite portion of the organized system of sentiments which the customer has relating to his business. When things have advanced to this stage we have what is commonly known as goodwill—whether towards the salesman or his firm, or both. It is dependent on the salesman how strong this goodwill becomes. Its ultimate stage is reached when the customer becomes as great a champion of the firm’s goods and of the salesman as the salesman is himself. This is arrived at when he has totally identified the firm and the salesman with his own individuality, and recognized them as integral parts of his business sentiment. If the firm or the salesman is decried by another, then the customer’s own self-regarding sentiment is affronted, and he shows an appropriate resentment. It is this stage in his relations with a customer that every salesman should aim at. In other words, the customer should “swear by” him, his firm, and his products.

CHAPTER VII

PLANNING THE INTERVIEW

STUDY of territory concerned—Elaboration of selling points: Profits, suitability, uniqueness, quality, price, prestige of supplying firm, services attached to line, advertising schemes—Possible objections—Samples—Advertising literature.

So far the problems of selling have been dealt with in a general way. We will now proceed to lay down certain procedures which may be safely followed during the various stages in selling a product. It is not dogmatically asserted that these procedures *should* be followed. Every salesman must necessarily adapt his methods to suit particular circumstances, and to fit in with his own personality.

There are five stages in making a sale—

1. Planning the interview.
2. Obtaining the interview.
3. The preliminary stages of the interview.
4. The body of the interview.
5. Closing the interview.

Planning the Interview

It is very unwise for any salesman to interview a customer unless he has previously thought out what he is going to do during that interview. The actual amount of planning necessary will vary according to the customer and the amount of business it is expected will be done.

The first step in planning the interview is to study the territory according to the prevailing trade conditions, the type of business done in the locality, competing lines, and the marketing possibilities of your own line.

The second step will be to find out as much as you can about the buyer you are going to visit—his psychological type, the best means of approaching him, how far he has a grip on his business, does he need advice or will he resent this being given, what is the best method of approaching him conversationally, i.e. his interests, etc., what are his powers, and how can you get beneath his dignity?

The third step is to make a survey of the type of business you are going to call on. Is it carefully controlled, what are its ramifications, in what does it specialize, on what type of customer does it depend for the bulk of its trade, is the profit made on a basis of large turnover or steady trade?

The fourth step is the most important of all, and consists in arranging the selling-points of the product you are offering. The main selling-points will be centred about—

1. Profits
 - (a) immediate; or
 - (b) on the basis of a large turnover.
2. Suitability of line.
3. Uniqueness of line.
4. Special features—quality, price, etc.
5. Prestige of firm supplying.
6. Services attached to line.
7. Advertising schemes to help sale to consumers.

Profits

The profits on a line are considered by a buyer from one or both of two aspects. Some who do a steady trade depend on a fair margin; others on a small profit but a rapid turnover. It is wise to determine beforehand what profit your customer goes after, and advance your arguments as to profit accordingly. Always bear

in mind, too, that, all other things being equal, profit is the deciding factor in making a sale.

Suitability

Carefully sketch out how far the line you propose to sell will fit in with the needs of the particular business for which your customer will be buying, and to what extent it will be in demand among the consumer public.

Uniqueness

It is necessary to ascertain in what way the product you are selling is different from and better than other similar products on the market. If you cannot do this there is less possibility of making your buyer interested. Your knowledge of the line will help you in marshalling the selling-points under this heading.

Special Features (Quality, Price, etc.)

Every buyer is interested in the price of the line, and any special features relating to discounts, terms, etc. Any details as to quality that are of importance should also be classified.

Prestige of Firm

This is an important selling-point, but the use made of it will vary according to circumstances, and must be employed at the discretion of the salesman.

Services Attached to Line

The salesman must familiarize himself with these, as in many instances they may be the determining factors in effecting a sale. Prompt delivery or else when deliveries can be made, packings, display material, and similar services available should be carefully gone into.

Advertising Schemes to Help Sale to Consumer

If a retailer knows a manufacturer is putting the weight of his advertising behind a line he will be much influenced in giving an order, particularly if it is an initial one, or else one for a new line that is just being introduced to the public. The salesman should thus obtain a thorough grip of advertising plans.

Having gone through all the possible selling-points, the salesman should proceed to classify and memorize them in such a way that they will readily come into his mind during the actual interview. The method will vary according to the salesman's own preferences, but first of all it would be wise to arrange them in order of importance, then having done that, memorize them by means of a code or some other such method.

Possible Objections

The salesman should put himself in his potential customer's position, and critically examine the proposition from an entirely impersonal point of view, with the object of finding out what objections the customer is likely to raise. Having anticipated the objections in this way he should set out to discover how they may best be answered. If this is done, things will be much easier for him in the subsequent interview.

Samples

The salesman should go through his samples carefully to ascertain if they are in a good and attractive condition. If they are not, then they must be replaced. Unattractive samples will rarely effect a sale. Then the samples must be arranged in the salesman's bag so that when he requires to show them he will know exactly where they are, and will not be forced to fumble for them. Fumbling for samples makes an

awkward moment during an interview. A salesman should be able to pick the sample he wants out of his bag blindfolded. If he produces the wrong sample it may mean that the whole interest of his customer is side-tracked.

Advertising Literature

The last step in the planning of an interview is for the salesman to obtain all literature, advertising pulls, etc., relating to his products, and, in addition, to master them thoroughly. The customer's interest is maintained by having them ready to show him. Literature about a product is often just as effective as actual samples, and at times even more so.

CHAPTER VIII

OBTAINING THE INTERVIEW

WALKING into the shop—By letter—By telephone—Luncheon interviews.

AN interview may be obtained in four ways—

1. By walking into the shop.
2. By letter.
3. By telephone.
4. At some outside meeting-place.

Walking into the Shop

Actually the great majority of interviews are probably obtained by the salesman simply walking into his customer's shop and presenting his card. The procedure will vary according to the status of the customer. The simplest case occurs where the customer is the small shopkeeper, and is accessible at all times. It is simply necessary then for the salesman to present his card and go on with the actual interview. However, he should ask the prospective customer for an interview with just the same ceremony as if he were calling on a big buyer. The customer will be pleased at the implied flattery. Always assume the customer is a busy man, and that in giving you an interview he is conferring a favour. Endeavour in a subtle way to convey this to him, but at the same time be none the less insistent that he give you the interview. In subsequent interviews it may be wise for the salesman to send advice notices telling the customer when he will be calling upon him. This has a good effect in maintaining contact, and moreover does not give the customer an opportunity of saying he did not expect the

call. It also shows that you attach some real importance to interviewing him.

As the importance of the buyer increases, so in proportion does the difficulty of obtaining an interview with him. Departmental store buyers are comparatively simple to interview; they have set hours, and will usually interview, if they have time, any salesman from a reputable firm who sends his card along to them. Buyers for multiple or chain stores, where central buying is done for a chain of shops, are sometimes protected by a liveried attendant, who is often most difficult to get past. The salesman will assuredly encounter difficulties, but they can be got over by first of all "cultivating" this attendant, and making him friendly. In dealing with the attendant it is fatal to entrust him with any message involving selling-points which you wish him to convey to his chief. He will only repeat a mixed version which will not be to the salesman's advantage. Quietly insist on an interview, or at least insist that your card be taken in, but reserve all details of your proposition for your own interview with the chief. Don't be put off with the word that the chief is busy, endeavour rather to obtain an appointment at some time when he will be able to see you. Often no small amount of ingenuity will have to be employed to get an interview. The means must be a matter for the discretion of the salesman. It may be worth noting that in obtaining an interview under these conditions the prestige of the firm or of the traveller will have a great effect on the willingness with which the interview is granted.

Obtaining an Interview by Letter

It is often not possible to obtain an interview by the simple procedure of the salesman presenting his card.

This is desirable wherever possible, but certain of the large buyers for chain stores will only interview by appointment, made after correspondence. Fortunately, the occasions on which a salesman must write for an appointment are few, otherwise he would be forced to employ a secretary. Occasionally, when presentation of his card has failed to obtain an interview, it may be advantageous to write for an appointment. It must, however, always be remembered that, as a general rule, writing for appointments is not desirable if the interview can be obtained in any other way.

Certain fundamental principles should be remembered in writing this type of letter. It will be borne in mind that, first of all, the attention of the prospect must be obtained, then his interest, and, finally, a "need" must be created so that the prospect will want to see the salesman and discuss the proposition in more detail with him. Thus the letter must represent the silent salesman influencing where the salesman himself cannot penetrate. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the letter should not represent the "complete" salesman. It should pave the way, but not be a substitute for an interview. Its main and only object is to create the desire for an interview.

To consider the problem of obtaining the attention of the prospect, the traditional methods are to rely on the prestige of the firm which the salesman represents. Often if there is any prestige connected with the salesman himself—for example, he may be the amateur golf champion—this may be used effectively. Other more modern methods are to use striking note-paper, striking type, or a striking method of address. To the English buyer, however, this tends to suggest the same thing as a "flashily" dressed salesman. It is, as a rule, preferable to employ "quiet"

paper, with a dignified letter head and standard type.

The actual wording of the letter must obtain the prospect's interest, and create in him the want to have an interview with the salesman. To do this the most pertinent of the selling-points and the product may be pithily and briefly mentioned. The method of doing this must be suggestive of possibilities rather than actually descriptive of them. Details should not be gone into very much. Be as brief but as arresting as possible. A lengthy letter often will not be read, and is not nearly so effective as a few short sentences. Finally, aim at leaving the impression that should your prospect be interested you will be pleased to call upon him at his convenience and explain further details. If he really is interested, i.e. you have correctly judged your possible market and the method of approaching it, then you will be given the interview.

Obtaining the Interview by Telephone

The advice to salesmen who consider obtaining an interview by telephone is that usually it is extremely injudicious. A telephone conversation really only takes the place of a personal interview, and being impersonal cannot do this effectively. The telephone conversation must of necessity convey more details than the letter. In brief, the *buyer* will tend to regard a telephone conversation as being the substitute for an interview—so, as a general rule, avoid this method of approach. A well-worded letter will obtain an interview if there are any selling possibilities at all in a proposition so far as an individual buyer is concerned. Then, once having done that, the salesman must depend on his personality to establish contact.

Lunch-time Interviews

Many a good sale is effected as the result of the mellowing effect of a good dinner or in the convivial atmosphere of a club. This is one of the social aspects of selling, and is one that may well be considered by the salesman. However, discretion must be employed. Personal contact must have already been established and cemented between salesman and prospect, otherwise an invitation to dine will be regarded as undue familiarity. Further, there is a certain type of buyer who will obtain free meals in this way, and will not give orders. Finally, the salesman should remember that too much can be made of this social aspect with the result that business is neglected. Social relations during business hours that do not produce business are not desirable. It is well for the salesman to use his discretion, and at times survey his social activities during business hours to ascertain exactly what business has resulted, with a view to directing his actions accordingly.

CHAPTER IX

PRELIMINARIES IN AN INTERVIEW

PUNCTUALITY—Waiting for the interview—The first contact with a buyer—The preliminary approach.

IF the interview has been obtained by letter, be punctual, or it is even better to arrive a few minutes before time, so that you can compose yourself in preparation for the actual interview. Avoid the unpardonable sin of being late, for two reasons—

1. You arrive at the actual interview flustered and unable to give it the quiet unruffled concentration which is so necessary.

2. By being late, you waste the prospect's time and also give him the impression that you do not care a great deal about what business you do with him.

Waiting for the Interview

The initial procedure, whether an appointment is made or not, is to present your card, letter of introduction, or other credentials. These may be handed direct to the customer or else sent into his office through the medium of an attendant. If it is necessary to wait while the customer considers other business, do not feverishly turn over in your mind the possibilities of the interview: think of anything but the coming interview. If the salesman is required to wait in an outer office he may take the opportunity to exchange remarks, and so obtain the goodwill of the attendant who guards the door. In doing this, he must be careful not to lose his dignity. The goodwill of this attendant is essential, but it is equally essential that he have the utmost respect for the salesman. If the salesman has the

respect of the attendant, this impression will be conveyed to the chief in the main office.

Many salesmen who have a great deal of waiting in outer offices included in their routine, make a practice of carrying some light reading around with them. Others make a practice of glancing over the previous orders of the day. Whatever procedure be adopted, never set your mind on the forthcoming interview: on the other hand, *do* something, and do not appear idle.

The First Contact

The moment comes when the buyer is ready to see the salesman. At this stage the salesman must consciously employ all that has been said earlier about personality traits. He must make a good first impression. The fact must be borne in mind that the dignity and self-satisfaction of the buyer must find full expression in these first few moments. The salesman must be courteously deferential, and at the same time maintain his own dignity and poise, giving at once an impression of competence and self-confidence which, though insistent, does not express itself at the expense of the buyer's personality. Undue familiarity is undesirable. Whether the salesman shakes hands or not will depend on the attitude of the buyer. In other words, the salesman must at once begin selling his own personality before attempting to sell the goods.

The details of this preliminary stage cannot be taken too seriously. The salesman must aim at being natural, regarding the buyer as just another human being like himself, and one to whom every courtesy is due. Nothing must be overdone—that is to become flamboyant and ineffective.

The salesman should remain standing until invited to be seated. It is wise to dispose of one's hat and

sample bag as soon as possible. Nothing looks so awkward as to be standing holding these. Dispose of the hat on a convenient table, but do not poke it right in the range of your prospect's view: it will offend him. Place it in some spot where it will be unobtrusive. Do not put it on the floor. Get rid of it, however. Many salesmen make the mistake of holding their hats in their hands and twisting them nervously, to the great, even if concealed, irritation of the buyer. Put the sample bag out of the way in some equally unobtrusive spot where, nevertheless, it is within easy reach, and can be picked up the moment it is required. It may be placed on the floor, but, like the hat, must not be within the range of the customer's vision. If it is stuck in front of him it is too obvious a hint that you have come to sell him something, and he may tend to resent this.

The Preliminary Approach

If invited by the customer to be seated, do so quickly and with care. Make sure to seat yourself deliberately, but do not "flop" into the chair—unfortunate accidents often happen as the result of this. Maintain your dignity and an attitude of expectant and courteous attention. Do not immediately rush into an attempt to sell the product. Sell your personality first, and let the product wait for the time being. Allow the customer first to absorb your personality and be favourably impressed by it. He will often make conversation for you. If so, let him—he may like to expand. Let him do so, then when you find contact established—when he has absorbed your personality and you have absorbed the atmosphere of his personality—you can go ahead and guide the conversation towards the selling of the product.

Buyers vary in their temperament and moods. It

is important that the salesman adapt himself accordingly. Although certain broad lines of procedure are laid down, every salesman must learn to be an opportunist, and, using his discretion, act according to circumstances. The salesman is the best judge as to the length of time these preliminary stages are to take. They may cover even more than one actual interview. It should always be borne in mind that at the outset of an interview the customer must be regarded as one who is not willing to buy the product. From this stage he advances to where he is (a) impressed favourably with the personality of the salesman; (b) convinced the salesman is worth listening to; (c) interested in the proposition that the salesman is about to put to him. When this last stage has been achieved successfully, the salesman can proceed to go ahead with the body of the interview, i.e. selling the actual product.

your exposition. Make your words carry your convictions, and be quietly and unobtrusively confident as to the merits of your products. Do not enumerate selling-points that are not pertinent to your customer's business, and do not rattle them off like a gramophone. Deal with each point fully and emphatically, not passing on to the next until it has been absorbed and has carried conviction, or at least until it has had a chance to penetrate into the customer's mind. If, however, you "sense" the customer is not interested in a particular point pass on to the next one and elaborate the moment he becomes more than normally interested. Finally, do not allow the exposition of selling-points to become impersonal. Keep the prospect in the conversation. Make him feel that each point is of especial interest to him, and to him alone. Make sure he understands, and, if necessary, ask a question now and again to make sure he does.

The Question of Price

Once the "want" has been stimulated in the customer he will wish to know what its satisfaction will cost. It is not wise to force the matter of price upon a customer. In most instances he will ask about this himself, and even then, the salesman should not be in too great a hurry to reply. Before definitely stating the price, it is desirable to recount the advantages attendant upon a purchase, and also to emphasize the services which will be given to a customer subsequent upon a purchase. The correct way to quote a price is not to do so baldly and abruptly. Camouflage it with some personal compliment.

Some buyers will desire the salesman to give them special terms. A firm stand should be made. If a salesman once weakens and gives a cut price he will

not only be always expected to give a cut price but also will be making things harder for other salesmen. Cutting a price is not usually consistent with the etiquette of salesmanship. If the salesman is efficient he will be able to sell without cutting prices. Cutting is usually a confession of inefficient salesmanship in the face of competition. If the customer insists and will not give an order without a cut price the matter should be referred to headquarters. The customer may be quite genuine in his request for a cut price, as possibly it may not pay him, for various reasons, to buy from you at the price quoted. Let headquarters decide on the merits of the case. If *they* decide in the negative it is possible for you to remain on more friendly terms with the customer than if you yourself, on your own responsibility, make the decision.

Disposal of Objections

After the price has been quoted to him, the customer will occasionally reiterate his objections to the product. Bear in mind that in the first place he would not have permitted the interview to proceed so far were he not interested in the line; in the second place, from the psychological point of view, this voicing of objections is another way in which his self-satisfaction finds expression. By voicing objections, reasonable or otherwise, he is "showing off" what he knows, and so vindicating his dignity and self-esteem. Whatever the motive underlying the voiced objections, the salesman should, when he planned the interview, have anticipated them and now be ready with his answer. If his knowledge of the product is satisfactory he should dispose of this stage of the interview rapidly enough. The main thing is never to admit that an objection has you "floored," nor even to engage in a heated argument.

Objections may be classified under four headings—

1. Previous unsatisfactory dealings with firm.
2. The goods are already being bought from someone else.
3. No demand from the consumer for the goods.
4. Prices, etc., wrong.

There are other minor objections which need not be dealt with here.

Previous Unsatisfactory Dealings with Firm

Occasionally another salesman has left a bad feeling behind him. The salesman must rely on his own personality to overcome this. Often complaints have been lodged against goods, and other misunderstandings have arisen which have not been remedied. The only answer the salesman can make is that he will go into the matter and clear things up. It has already been emphasized in another chapter that every detail should be gone into. The salesman must take the matter up with headquarters, and do everything in his power to bring about a better understanding.

The Goods are Already Being Bought from Someone Else

In this case nothing can be done for the moment, but the advantages of purchasing from his firm should be clearly pointed out by the salesman, and, if possible, an understanding arrived at that when the need for the goods arises again he will be favourably considered.

No Demand from the Consumer

This is probably the commonest of objections, and is the one most easily answered if the salesman has previously made a survey of the potential market. If a new line is being introduced, attention should be

drawn to the advertising and publicity schemes in hand to create a consumer demand. The salesman should have a few concrete examples illustrating the market for his product or those of a similar nature. Concrete examples are the most convincing arguments in the world.

Wrong Prices

When the customer begins to indicate that the price is not good enough for him, let him exhaust his objections, then begin to stress once more the advantages attached to making a purchase. Keep him off price. Do not argue about it. Take his attention off price, and endeavour to stimulate further in him a "want" for the product, that will outweigh and make him forget considerations of price.

Persuasion to a Decision

This is the most critical stage of the interview, and you should not hurry the prospect towards it. Lead him to it by the process of suggestion, and rather let him arrive at this stage as the result of thought processes which are really only guided by you. Above all, if there is a danger of a "no" decision keep him away from arriving at this stage. If necessary, break off the interview in some way and mention you will call when he has thought the matter over once more. Forcing matters will be an attempt to force your own will upon the personality of the customer, and, as such, is consciously or unconsciously resented by him. Lead him up to his decision in such a way that he is not conscious of its being done. Produce your order form unobtrusively, and at the appropriate time. Then once an order has been obtained, express your thanks.

Taking the Actual Order

If a new line is being introduced it is not necessarily important that a large order be obtained as a start. It is the repeat orders that count. Bearing this in mind, do not strive too much for a large initial order. The customer may be frightened off. Suggest the trial of a small quantity, with the understanding that if it is a success a larger order will be forthcoming. Most customers will be prepared to do this. With a new line, from the headquarter's point of view, it is more desirable to get small quantities placed over a wide area with the possibility of a repeat order from the customers with whom it has been a success, than to have a few large orders with only the possibility of repeat orders from those few customers.

CHAPTER XI

CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

Two things may happen at the close of an interview, and the procedure must be adapted accordingly—

1. A sale may be effected.
2. A sale may not be effected.

When a Sale has Been Effected

If a sale has been effected, the salesman should endeavour to get away without taking up any more of the customer's time. On the other hand, care must be taken not to give the impression that the salesman's one and only object was to obtain a sale, and once having obtained that he abruptly "drops" the customer.

Once the sale has been accomplished and the order taken, the salesman should summarize the conditions of sale, and the advantages to be gained from the purchase, in such a way as to subtly convey the impression that the customer has shown good judgment in making the purchase. Settle details as to date of delivery, etc., then leave with a word of thanks to the customer. The main aim of the closing stages of the interview must be to leave the customer in a glow of satisfaction at the fact that he has done a really good stroke of business. If necessary, give an indication of when you propose to call and see him again.

After leaving the customer, and while your impressions of him are still vivid, note down in a book any facts about his personality, his business, or his future requirements that you consider will be of use. If it has been a first call it is important this should be gone

through in detail. If it is not a first call, it is only necessary to note modifications of any previous ideas you had formed.

When a Sale has Not Been Made

If a sale has not been made the interview should not be "closed" at all. The matter should simply be kept open and, as it were, discussion of the whole matter postponed. Always make an opening for another future call if during the interview you have still remained convinced the prospect really does need your product though he has not as yet recognized this fact. If you have really become convinced he does not need your product there is nothing more to be done except express the hope that at some other time you may be of service to him. You can then leave the prospect cordially. Never let your disappointment be apparent, but depart as cheerfully and apparently as hopeful as when you arrived. It will do no harm, and may do a lot of good should you come to have future relations with him.

CHAPTER XII

ANALYSING A LOST SALE

WHENEVER a sale has not been achieved the salesman should analyse the whole interview with the object of determining why the sale was lost, what lessons may be learnt as to his own failings during the interview, and what can be done more fully to ensure a sale at a similar interview in the future.

The interview should be analysed as follows—

1. *Was the market survey correct?* That is, did the prospect really need the product? If so, try again. If not, it is no use securing a subsequent interview to sell the further line.

2. *Was the interview adequately planned?* Did you know all about the prospect and his business before interviewing him? Was the time of interview appropriate? Did the buyer really have the power or the ready money to make a purchase at the time? Was your method of approaching the customer the correct one? Did you anticipate his objections to a purchase? Did you adequately outline the selling-points of your product? Were your samples effective?

3. *Was the customer "sold" on the idea he needed your product?* What steps did you take to ensure this? Did they achieve their object?

4. *Did you "sell" your personality to the customer?* Was he favourably impressed at the outset? If not, why not? Did you make any clumsy movements, etc., at the opening of the interview? Did you feel at your best when approaching the customer? Were your general reactions appropriate? Were you sufficiently confident? Were you appropriately assertive?—or too

much so?—or not sufficiently? Did his personality overawe you? Were you persistent enough?

5. *Did you sell your advice to the customer?* Was he convinced? Was your method of suggestion too obvious?

6. *Did you "sell" your firm?* What were the customer's reactions to the prestige, etc., of your firm? Had he a previous grudge against the firm?

7. *Did you sell the product to the customer?* Was your knowledge of the product inadequate, with the result you were unable to answer questions? Did you outline your selling-points to their greatest advantage? Were competitors' lines too strongly rooted for you? Were the profits on the line adequate? Was the price satisfactory? Were the conditions of sale good enough? Did the services attached to the purchase of the line have any value in the eyes of the customer? Had the customer previous unfortunate experiences with this or other similar lines he had bought?

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